LÂON, VIEW FROM THE PLAIN

CATHEDRAL CITIES OF FRANCE

BY

HERBERT MARSHALL, R.W.S.

AND

HESTER MARSHALL

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BY HERBERT MARSHALL, R.W.S.

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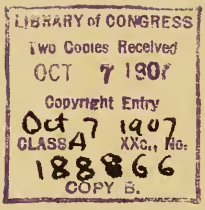

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NOTE

The following chapters are the result of notes put together during summers spent in France in the course of the last five years. They are not intended to mark out any particular geographical scheme, though considered as isolated suggestions they may possibly prove useful to the intending traveller; nor do they aim at covering all the Cathedral cities of France.

The authors are indebted for much valuable help from the following books: Viollet-le-Duc's "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture"; Mr. Phené Spiers's "Architecture East and West"; Mr. Francis Bond's "Gothic Architecture in England"; Mr. Henry James's "Little Tour in France"; Mr. Cecil Headlam's "Story of Chartres"; Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest" and "Sketches of French Travel"; Dr. Whewell's "Notes on a Tour in Picardy and Normandy"; M. Guilhermy's "Itineraire archéologique de Paris"; M. Hoffbauer's "Paris à travers les ages"; M. Enlart's "Architecture Réligieuse"; Mr. Walter Lonergan's "Historic Churches of Paris"; the "Chronicles" of Froissart and Monstrelet; and to the letters in *The Times* of its war correspondent, 1870 and 1871.

H. M. M. and H. M.

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Chapter One

A FRENCH CATHEDRAL CITY

THERE are in France to-day three distinct classes of cities—one might even add, of cathedral cities—and as the bishopric is a dignity far more usual in France than in England, "cathedral" may serve for the present as a term inclusive of many towns.

Firstly, there is the town whose local importance has remained unchanged through a succession of centuries and an eventful history, which has added a modern importance to that bequeathed to it by Time. Such towns are Le Mans, Angers, Amiens and Rouen. Secondly, we find the towns whose glory has departed, but who still preserve the outward semblance of that glory, though they remind us in passing through them of a body without a spirit, of an empty house, whose inhabitants are long dead and have left behind them only the echoes of their past footsteps. These towns are a picturesque group, and if we go back upon the centuries, we shall find in

them the centre of much that has made history for our modern eyes to read. Look at Chartres and Bayeux, and Lâon and Troyes, for embodiments of this type. And lastly, there are the cities which exactly reverse the foregoing state of affairs, and owe their growth to the kindly fostering of a later age—an age which has learnt wisdom more quickly than its predecessors, and has learnt, moreover, to love the whirr of engines and the busy paths of commerce more than the safe keeping of ancient monuments and the reading of history in the worn greyness of their stones. Among these we may count Havre; but of this class it is more difficult to find examples in France, although in England the north country is thick with such mushroom cities.

The history of the growth of one Gaulish town may easily serve for that of another: later days decided its continued importance or its gradual decay, as the case might be; and, as Freeman points out in his essay upon French and English towns, "the map of Roman Gaul survives, with but few and those simple changes in the ecclesiastical map of France down to the great Revolution." Thus the history of these cities affected themselves alone and not, to any great extent, the lands in which they stood. It is a salient testimony to the lasting influence of ancient Gaul that in most town-names some trace can be

ST. MARTIN, LÂON

found of the old name, either of the tribe which inhabited it, or of the territory belonging to that tribe; and even under the Roman rule the Gallic forms did not entirely disappear. Later, when the Franks came from the East, one would suppose that they had names of their own for the conquered cities; but if this were the case, these names have not come down to us—all of which goes to show that the Frankish dominion, though it lasted on, and gave to the land her ablest dynasty of kings, had no real rooted influence in the country, and that France, as relating to ancient Gaul, is a formal and almost an empty title.

The Gallic cities owed their origin in the earliest times, naturally, to their situation. The roving tribes, looking for a settlement, would choose a camping ground either on a rocky hill, where they could safely entrench themselves against a possible enemy, or on an island in the midst of a river or marsh, where the surrounding fens would be an efficient safeguard; and it speaks well for their choice, that when the Romans came, skilled in the knowledge of war, offensive and defensive, they did not destroy the settlements of the conquered tribes, but rebuilt and fortified them according to the inimitable pattern of Rome, not effacing but improving what was already to hand. Instead of the rude Gallic huts, stately palaces rose up, with their

marble baths; aqueducts threw a succession of arches to the nearest water source, theatres sloped up the hill-side, bridges crossed the river, and where the grottoes of the Druidic or other primitive faiths had been, rose the columns and friezes of splendid temples to Jupiter and Diana and Apollo. Certainly it was a change for the better; and the appearance of many of these towns under the Cæsars was probably much more imposing, though perhaps less picturesque, than that which they presented in mediæval days. In the later Roman era a new element introduces itself. From the early Christian Church at Rome come missionary saints; not saints in those days, but often the poorest and meanest of the brethren, charged with a message to Gaul—Hilary, Martin, Dionysius, and the others. Fierce conflicts follow, persecutions, burnings, martyrdoms—Dionysius bears witness at Lutetia, Savinian and Potentian at Sens—and at last the first church arises within the city, poor and meagre very often in comparison with the huge pagan temples which it replaces, but loved and venerated by the faithful few, and, best of all, the origin of the grand cathedrals which are now the glory of France. "The votaries of the new creed found a home within the walls of their seats of worship such as the votaries of the elder creed had never found within theirs.

THE QUAYSIDE, AMIENS

And around the church arose the dwellings of the bishop and his clergy, a class of men destined to play no small part in the history of the land." In the Christian city, then, we can begin to trace the beginnings of the mediæval city. Other foundations sprang up in time within the walls—a baptistery was built, as at Aix and Poitiers, to meet the needs of the flocks of converts; other churches perpetuated the memory of some saint; among the river meadows some royal or saintly founder saw a fitting spot for a convent, and the abbey church arose, with its cloisters, dormitories and refectories, and all the other fair buildings in which the early brothers took such a loving pride. Then the bishop himself, with his dignity growing as the Christian faith advanced, must be housed as befitted a deputy of the Holy See; and forthwith sprang up those lordly *évêchés* which even now serve to remind us of their ancient beauty, though in some cases the civil arm has taken them over, and converted them into hôtels de ville. Then came the barbarian inroads, first of Vandals, Huns, Franks and the rest, next of Normans. These attacked, but could not destroy, or even permanently harm, the position of the city; and when the invaders had either gone their way or settled down in the land, new elements of strength and importance were added to the town-

ship: castles and strongholds were built up for the great men who had taken possession of the chief cities, and the great civil or feudal power of the dukes and counts began to exercise its jurisdiction side by side with the old-established influence of the Church. Then, as was notably the case at Le Mans and Troyes, the growing commercial importance of a town would force a communal charter from the seigneur; a burgher quarter would rise, quite as important as the quarter of the nobles and the clergy, and thus the city would become trebly strengthened, except, indeed, when, as was sometimes the case, one power resented the fancied encroachments of the other and made war upon its neighbours.

This power within itself was undoubtedly all to the advantage of the city; but it was fatal to the unity of the kingdom, since it cut France up into a mass of separate states, any one of which could, on the occasion of a quarrel with the sovereign—and these quarrels were rather the rule than the exception—fortify itself by means of its count, its castle and its city walls, and defy the royal forces at its pleasure. While cathedral cities in England were drawing closer and closer to the king as their head, and thereby sinking their own strength in the unity of the Crown, those in France were

A STREET IN PERIGUEUX

striving at a power apart from the Crown, or, rather, striving to maintain a power which the Crown had never yet been able to incorporate with itself. Thus a city of France has a much more varied, a much more individual history than has the sister city in England; a story less bound up as part of the great whole of the history of the French kingdom, more concentrated within its own walls, and therefore more tangible, if it be desired to study it irrespective of that whole history. This, then, is the story of its growth from almost pre-historic days. Whether, as an individual city, it flourished after the Middle Ages had fortified and strengthened it, or whether it fell into a state of quiet, picturesque and peaceful decay, depended of course upon particular circumstances, but enough remains to make of the general history of the French city a fascinating though almost inexhaustible study, only surpassed by the study of each town in its separate case.

Wars and revolutions have done their best to destroy what Time had kindly tried to preserve for our delight; nevertheless, a cathedral town in France of to-day is a very pleasant place, and offers exceptional opportunity for the study of French life in almost every aspect. Our business here, however, is with the cathedrals and the historical

side of the town, rather than with the lighter points of view; and such things as every traveller will encounter in the course of his journeys, the crowd outside the *cafés,* the weekly markets, the festivals, civil and ecclesiastical, the quaint ways and speech of the peasant folk and the *contretemps* of hotel life have not only been described before, times without number, but are such as will be fairly obvious to the average observer, and, if he has never travelled before, will come all the more as a pleasant surprise if he is left to find them out for himself. If, as is more likely to be the case in this enlightened age, he is an experienced traveller, he will know them all by heart, and perhaps be inclined to cavil at having them set before him once again in a light which could not pretend to any novelty.

Chapter Two

BOULOGNE TO AMIENS

BOULOGNE is perhaps too near the starting point to arrest the outward-bound traveller; he ranks it with Calais, Dieppe, and Havre, as a place to be passed through as quickly as possible; and the splendid train service to Paris naturally makes him hesitate to break his journey at Boulogne. The general tendency in England is to despise the French railway service, and some guide-books even now tell us that the average speed of a French express is from thirty-five to forty-five miles an hour, also that the trains invariably pass each other on the left-hand side. As a matter of fact, all the main lines follow the same rule of the road which obtains in England, and as to average speed, the run from Calais to Paris equals, if it does not exceed, that of any long-distance train-service in our own country, covering the distance of 185 miles at the rate of fifty-six miles an hour.

As a seaport and fishing centre, Boulogne is one of the most interesting and important towns in France; and its fishing-boats sail out in great numbers to the North Sea for the cod fishery along the north coast of Scotland. When the herring fishing begins, Boulogne adds its contingent to the fleets of Cornwall, to the luggers of the West Coast, and to the cobbles of Whitby; and on the eve of the departure to the fishing-ground, the fisherman's quarter, known as La Beurière, is alive with the orgies of its sailor population. Dancing takes place on the quays, and short entertainments are held in an improvised theatre, while the rich brown-ochre sails of the splendid luggers and smacks are stretched from deck to deck, forming an awning under which the owners and captains meet together with their friends to wish success to the undertaking of those who "go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters."

Boulogne has the reputation of being the most Anglicised of French towns, and was in years gone by often associated with the seamy side of society. Many a stranger found here a convenient refuge, and Mr. Deuceace and other of Thackeray's heroes enjoyed the sea breezes of Boulogne after the mental strain of somewhat questionable financial manœuvres.

The city walls, restored in the sixteenth or

THE PORTE GAYOLE, BOULOGNE

seventeenth century, date back to 1231, and were built on the foundations of the ancient town of Bononia, generally identified with the Roman Gesoriacum, though not on very reliable authority. From its position on the high grassy cliffs of Picardy, guarding the little river Liane and looking out over the waves to the white line of the English shore, Boulogne in other days had an importance quite distinct from that which we now assign to it. The Viking sailing down the English Channel saw it as one of the outposts of a new and fair land open to the conquest of fire and sword, and in his primitive fashion of asserting the mastery, destroyed the city on the cliff. Later on, these ravages were made good under the rule of Rolf, the "Ganger," by this time master of Neustria; the city was restored and became the head of a countship, which dignity it retained until late in the fifteenth century, when Louis XI. cast envious eyes upon it, and by a stroke of craft approaching near to genius, united it to the crown of France, declaring the Blessed Virgin to be patroness of the town and himself her humble vassal, holding it under her suzerainty, which no man in France dared to deny. Henry VIII. laid siege to Boulogne in 1544 and gained it for England; but the day of English prestige in France had gone by, and her right of possession was of very

short duration, for in the next reign Boulogne was given back to France, and Calais alone remained to England of the spoils of the Hundred Years' War.

Above the present town rises the monument known as the "Colonne de la Grande Armée," a memorial of the first Napoleon's encampment at Boulogne in 1804, and of his magnificent preparations for the invasion of England. In the Château, which dates from the thirteenth century and is now used as barracks, Napoleon III. was confined after his abortive descent upon the town in 1840. It was the second of these desperate attempts to dethrone the "constitutional king" Louis Philippe and reinstate the Imperial dynasty. The expedition to Strasburg four years before had at least been attended by this much success, that the young aspirant was enthusiastically welcomed by the military portion of the population; but the descent upon Boulogne, planned at the time when the body of the first Emperor was being brought from St. Helena to Paris, was a failure from first to last. The little band of conspirators, about fifty in number, with their tame eagle—a symbol of the Imperial power—landed at the port, but found no adherents, and within a few hours of their landing were under arrest. Napoleon himself underwent trial before the Chamber of Peers, and after a short

imprisonment, as we have seen, in the Château, was sent to the castle of Ham-sur-Somme.

Three out of the four original gates of the ancient city still remain, notably the Porte Gayole, the rooms in whose flanking towers were at one time used as prisons. In the room above the gateway were formerly held the meetings of the *Guyale,* a *réunion* of ancient associations of merchants—what would now be called a chamber of commerce—and from this the gate-house was called Porte Gayole.

Of the cathedral at Boulogne it is difficult to speak with any enthusiasm. It stands as a memorial of the Renaissance work of that period which we should call early Victorian; but like so many modern churches, it possesses an ancient crypt, part of which belongs to the twelfth century, showing that the foundations at least are those of a Gothic church, which was probably destroyed during the Revolution.

On the journey to Amiens the train passes through Abbeville on the Somme, a place some sixty years ago sacred to geologists, who, led by the distinguished Boucher de Perthes, Prestwick and Evans, extracted from the river bed and neighbouring peat and undisturbed gravels, not only remains of beaver, bear, &c., but also innumerable hand-

fashioned flints and stone hatchets, and made the valley of the Somme up to Amiens and St. Acheul classic ground to the antiquary and an object of pilgrimage to the student of pre-historic man.

In the early days of the Frank kings this quiet little town upon the Somme had acquired enough importance for fortification, and its city walls were built by Hugh Capet. Later on, after Peter the Hermit had lifted up his voice in Europe, and every man who called himself a true warrior turned his face eastward to Palestine, Abbeville was destined to play her part in the affairs of the great world outside her walls, and to share in the fortunes of that company of men whose watch-word was "Jerusalem." In the first two Crusades, when the crusading spirit was as yet ardent and pure and had not degenerated into a desire for plunder and rapine, the leaders met within the gates of Abbeville before setting out to the Holy Land.

One can well imagine the stir their presence made within the quiet precincts of the little town, the excitement of the townfolk, the eager crowding of the youth of the place around the standards of these great chiefs, Godfrey de Bouillon, destined to become king of Jerusalem; dark, passionate Robert of Normandy, son of the Con-

queror; Hugh of Vermandois, brother to the King of France; Stephen of Blois; Raymond of Toulouse; Robert of Flanders, he who was called the "Sword and Lance of the Christians"; and, lastly, Tancred the chivalrous, the very embodiment of the spirit of the crusaders—and a "very perfect, gentle knight."

For nearly two hundred years the English ruled Abbeville. When, in 1272, Eleanor of Castile was married to Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., the town was included in the estates which she brought to England as her dowry; and being near the sea coast, and consequently within easy reach of England, its new lords were able to retain their hold upon the city even after the disastrous close of the Hundred Years' War had given almost every English conquest back to France. Towards the end of the fifteenth century it fell into the hands of the Burgundian party, but the French crown finally reclaimed it in 1477. Since that time it has twice seen an international alliance concluded within its gates. In 1514, Anne of Brittany, the wife of Louis XII.—"Pater Patria"—died without having an heir in the direct line, and her husband, unwilling that the crown should go to François d'Angoulême, determined to take another wife, and made advances to Henry VIII.

for the hand of his beautiful sister, Mary Tudor; and after the negotiations were completed, they were married at Abbeville. As far as Louis's purpose went, however, the marriage was a failure, as the King died a few months later, and the Duc d'Angoulême, his son-in-law, ascended his throne as François I^er^. To his reign belongs the second alliance in the history of Abbeville, the pact signed between the King of France and Cardinal Wolsey, on behalf of Henry VIII., against the common enemy, Charles V.—a figure so commanding, so infinitely greater than his contemporaries, that beside him the brilliancy of François, the gallantry of Henry, and the pomp and magnificence of his favourite Wolsey, seemed entirely eclipsed, and the three men appear almost as puppets, unstable and vacillating, now the closest of friends, and now the bitterest of enemies.

Abbeville still maintains many of the old picturesque landmarks which made it a favourite sketching ground for Prout and for Ruskin. The market-place is surrounded by a number of houses with high pitched gables, coloured in various tints of white, grey and pale green. Some beautiful drawings by Ruskin, executed in pencil and tint, which have lately been exhibited to the public, bear testimony to its picturesqueness, of which a great deal

ABBEVILLE

still remains in the side streets and along the river front.

The church of St. Wolfran is late Flamboyant, and is looked upon by Ruskin as " a wonderful proof of the fearlessness of a living architecture," for, say what one will of it, that Flamboyant of France, however morbid, was as vivid and intense in its imagination as ever any phase of mortal mind. The nave consists of bays having a high clerestory and a triforium screened by rich sixteenth century carving. The ribs of the vaulting fall sheer down without imposts or break of any kind. The low chancel and eastern termination of the church are unworthy of the splendid carving of the western façade.

The approach to Amiens offers no *coup d'œil* of clustering towers or spires such as an English or Norman cathedral city usually gives us, and the Cathedral itself is hidden as we pass into the heart of the town along the Rue des Trois Cailloux, a street which is said to follow the alignment of the old city walls. Ruskin advises the traveller, however short his time may be, to devote it, not to the contemplation of arches and piers and coloured glass, but to the woodwork of the chancel, which he considers the most beautiful carpenter's work of the Flamboyant period. Note should be taken of two windows in the Chapel of the Cardinal de la

Grange, built about 1375. These are very interesting as foreshadowing in their detail that style of architecture—the Flamboyant—which obtained in France in the fifteenth century and was contemporaneous with the English Perpendicular.

The two western towers look little more than heavily built buttresses, and as towers are not very appropriate in design, being not square, but oblong in plan. They rise little above the ridge line of the nave, whose crossing with the transepts is marked by a beautiful *flèche*, which Ruskin, however, describes as "merely the caprice of a village carpenter." As he further declares, the Cathedral of Amiens is "in dignity inferior to Chartres, in sublimity to Beauvais, in decorative splendour to Rheims, and in loveliness of figure sculpture to Bourges," yet it fully deserves the name given to it by Viollet-le-Duc—"The Parthenon of Gothic architecture."

The height of the nave and aisles is, according to Mr. Francis Bond in his book "Gothic Architecture in England," respectively nearly three times their span, and the vastness of the fenestration is very striking, particularly in the clerestory, through whose lower mouldings the triforium is negotiated, thus dividing each bay into two storeys, clerestory and pier arch, instead of into three, clerestory

THE PLACE VOGEL, AMIENS

triforium and pier arch. This gives the effect after which the French architect strove: one vast blaze of light and colour through the upper windows, coming not only from the clerestory, but from the glazed triforium also; the magnificent deep blue glass typifying the splendour of the heavens. On the other hand, in a sunny clime, builders cared less for light, and preferred the effect of a blind triforium which throws the choir below into gloomy and mysterious shadow. Thus we see that upon the design of the triforium depends to a very great extent the effect of the light and shade of the interior of a great church.

Once, being personally conducted by the dean over one of the cathedrals of the west of England, the writer was suddenly called upon to give the derivation of "triforium." The word is applied to the ambulatory or passage, screened by an arcade, which runs between the pier arches and clerestory windows, and is considered to refer to the three openings, or spaces, *trinæ fores,* into which the arcading was sometimes divided. It probably has nothing to do with openings in multiples of three, nor with a Latinised form of "thoroughfare," as suggested in Parker's Glossary, although the main idea is that of a passage running round the inside of a church, either as at Westminster, in the form of an ambulatory

chamber, or of a gallery pierced through the main walls, from whence the structure can be inspected without the trouble of using ladders or erecting scaffolding. M. Enlart in his "Manuel d'Archéologie Française," derives the word from a French adjective "trifore," or "trifoire," through the Latin "transforatus," a passage pierced through the thickness of the wall; and this idea of a passage-way is certainly suggested by an old writer, Gervase, who, in his description of the new Cathedral of Canterbury, rebuilt after the fire, alludes to the increased number of passages round the church under the word "triforia." "Ibi triforium unum, hic duo in choro, et in alâ ecclesiæ tercium."

On the north side of the Cathedral flows the Somme, and there is perhaps no better means of realising the great height and mass of the building than by walking along the river banks, whence we see the old houses, great and small, rise tier above tier under the quiet grey outline of this "giant in repose."

In an extract from his private diary Ruskin gives the following description of this walk along the river, showing it in an aspect at once squalid and picturesque: "Amiens, May 11th.—I had a happy walk here this afternoon, down among the branching currents of the Somme: it divides into

EVENING ON THE SOMME AT AMIENS

five or six, shallow, green, and not over-wholesome; some quite narrow and foul, running beneath clusters of fearful houses, reeling masses of rotten timber; and a few mere stumps of pollard willow sticking out of the banks of soft mud, only retained in shape of bank by being shored up with timbers; and boats like paper boats, nearly as thin at least, for the costermongers to paddle about in among the weeds, the water soaking through the lath bottoms, and floating the dead leaves from the vegetable baskets with which they were loaded. Miserable little back yards, opening to the water, with steep stone steps down to it, and little platforms for the ducks; and separate duck staircases, composed of a sloping board with cross bits of wood leading to the ducks' doors; and sometimes a flower-pot or two on them, or even a flower—one group, of wall-flowers and geraniums, curiously vivid, being seen against the darkness of a dyer's backyard, who had been dyeing black, and all was black in his yard but the flowers, and they fiery and pure; the water by no means so, but still working its way steadily over the weeds, until it narrowed into a current strong enough to turn two or three windmills, one working against the side of an old Flamboyant Gothic church, whose richly traceried buttresses sloped down into the filthy stream; all ex-

quisitely picturesque, and no less miserable. We delight in seeing the figures in these boats, pushing them about the bits of blue water, in Prout's drawings; but as I looked to-day at the unhealthy face and melancholy mien of the man in the boat pushing his load of peat along the ditch, and of the people, men as well as women, who sat spinning gloomily at the cottage doors, I could not help feeling how many persons must pay for my picturesque subject and happy walk."

In his "Miscellaneous Studies" Walter Pater says: "The builders of the Church seem to have projected no very noticeable towers; though it is conventional to regret their absence, especially with visitors from England, where indeed cathedral and other towers are apt to be good and really make their mark . . . The great western towers are lost in the west front, the grandest, perhaps the earliest, of its species—three profound sculptured portals; a double gallery above, the upper gallery carrying colossal images of twenty-two kings of the house of Judah, ancestors of our Lady; then the great rose; above it the singers' gallery, half marking the gable of the nave, and uniting at their topmost storeys the twin, but not exactly equal or similar towers, oddly oblong in plan as if meant to carry pyramids or spires. In most cases, those early Pointed churches

are entangled, here and there, by the construction of the old round-arched style, the heavy, Norman or other, Romanesque chapel or aisle, side by side, though in strange contrast, with the soaring new Gothic nave or transept. But the older manner of the round arch, the *plein-cintre,* Amiens has nowhere or almost nowhere, a trace. The Pointed style, fully pronounced, but in all the purity of its first period, found here its completest expression."

Chapter Three

LÂON, RHEIMS AND SOISSONS

"WE passed Lâon in the dark," is a confession frequently made by travellers. The Geneva express used to stop here for dinner, and during the brief interval allowed for coffee and cigarettes many a traveller has gazed up at the great buttressed hill, silhoutted against a twilight sky, and wondered what manner of place it might be, half-fortress, half-church, rising some three hundred and fifty feet out of the plain with its crest of towers and houses.

If Paris is the type of the island cities of Gaul, surely Lâon may be called the type of the hill cities. "Lâon is the very pride of that class of town which out of Gaulish hill-forts grew into Roman and mediæval cities. None stands so proudly on its height; none has kept its ancient character so little changed to our own day. The town still keeps itself within the walls which fence in the hill-top, and whatever there is of suburb has grown up at the foot, apart from the ancient city."

Geologically, Lâon is a limestone island in the denuded plain of Soissonais and Béarnais, and was a Celtic stronghold, as its name, a contraction of *Laudunum,* shows, *dun* standing for a hill fortress. The town resembles in plan a blunt crescent, one horn of which is occupied by the cathedral and citadel. An electric railway connects the upper with the lower town, and a street from the market-place leads through the Parvis to the very beautiful west façade of the church. Cathedral, strictly speaking, it is no longer, for at Lâon we have another of those instances, always somewhat melancholy, of a deserted bishopstool. Here it is almost more pathetic, when we remember that the Bishop of Lâon was second in importance only to the Archbishop of Rheims himself, and, going back to the days of William Longsword, we find Lâon not only a bishopric, but a capital town—one of the great trio of cities which ruled northern France and fought amongst themselves for the chief mastery. There was the Duke of Paris in his capital; there was the Duke of the Normans, an outsider who by force of arms had settled at Rouen, and was a source of continual trembling to the Parisian duchy; and there was the King of the Franks on the hill-top at Lâon, nominally suzerain of both the others, but really in daily fear lest one or other, or both, should swoop

down and storm his hill-fortress and add the royal city of Lâon to lands which in those days went to any man who could get possession of them.

Tradition says that St. Béat, who lived towards the close of the third century, gathered his faithful together in a small chapel hewn out of the rock, over which was built later on the cathedral church of Notre Dame. This church, according to M. Daboval, seems to have been still in existence in the fifth century, and was even then of sufficient importance to attract thither many scholars who wished to study the Holy Scriptures. In the twelfth century the cathedral, Bishop's palace, and many other churches were burnt down, owing to communal troubles during the bishopric of Gaudry. The present cathedral has one specially distinctive feature: the east end, instead of being apsidal, follows the English type of a square termination. There are other churches in the neighbourhood built on a similar plan, which suggests the possibility of English architects having been engaged in their construction. Lâon is, however, in one important feature, a variant from the common arrangement in English churches of the eastern wall. It has there a great circular window only, instead of the immense wall of glass usually adopted in this country. The bays of the aisles are four-storied, in pairs,

with alternating piers, and of great beauty, the ribs of the vaulting springing from clusters of light shafts. There is a large ambulatory over the aisles, "which are built up in two stories, both of them vaulted, and the upper vaulted aisle giving valuable abutment to the clerestory wall." This internal arrangement appears to have been in favour with the architects of the early French Gothic style.

The twenty-eight side chapels are enclosed by some very lovely screens of a later date, which, being erected during the latter part of the sixteenth century, and of Renaissance design, are considered by the ultra-Gothic mind to clash with the rest of the cathedral. Nevertheless they are very beautiful in proportion and appropriateness, reticent in design, and admirable in execution.

Viollet-le-Duc, in his review of the cathedral of Lâon, says that it has a certain ring of democracy and is not of that religious aspect that attaches to Chartres, Amiens, or Rheims. From the distance it has more the appearance of a château than of a church: its nave is low when compared with other Gothic naves, and its general outside appearance shows evidence of something brutal and savage; and as far as its colossal sculptures of animals, oxen and horses, which appear to guard the upper parts of the towers, are concerned, they combine to give an im-

pression more of terror than of a religious sentiment. One does not feel, as one regards Notre Dame de Lâon, the stamp of an advanced civilisation, as at Paris or at Amiens. Everything is rude and rough; it is the monument of a people enterprising and energetic and full of great virility. They are the same men as are seen building elsewhere in the neighbourhood—a race of giants.

As we approach Rheims from Paris, Lâon, or Soissons, there is very little sign of the vineyards which one associates with the champagne country. The "vine-clad" hills lie to the south in the Epernay district. Here to the north of the city we see only well-watered, well-timbered country, lush meadow-lands, and even market-gardens, reminding us more of the upper reaches of the Thames valley than of a wine-growing country.

Rheims chiefly recommends itself to the English mind as the place where the kings of France were crowned. It would seem also as though the fact of being crowned at Rheims was a patent of royalty, so to speak, to the kings themselves, since, as Freeman remarks, their rights were never disputed after their anointing with the *sainte ampoule*. "Every king of the French crowned at Rheims," he says, "has been at once a Frenchman by birth and the undisputed heir of the founder of the dynasty. Hugh and

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his son Robert, neither of them born to royalty, were crowned, the one at Noyon, the other at Orléans. Henry the Fourth, the one king whose right was disputed, was crowned at Chartres."

Like Soissons, like Lâon, like Bourges even, Rheims has carried down to modern times the remains of that prestige which must always attach to a royal city, even though the royalty have long ago departed from it. It moreover brings us once again to the story of Joan the Maid. It is the scene of her mission's fulfilment, of France's triumph, of the beginning of that monarchy which Louis XI. established in its complete form and which the later Bourbons wrecked; and here, when the crown is safe on her king's head and Charles VII. has his own again, does Joan ask her reward—permission to return to her flocks in the fields of Domrémy. And but that this boon was too simple to grant, Joan's story might have ended with this, her greatest triumph, instead of in the market-place at Rouen.

After the relief of Orléans, Joan had captured Jargeau and Beaugency, and defeated the English in a great fight at Patay, in which Talbot, the English leader, was taken prisoner. Having cleared these last obstacles from Charles's path, she now set forth to tell him that all was ready and to persuade him to make all speed to Rheims. Speed, however, was

what the Dauphin either could not or would not make; and it is always the most unsatisfactory part of the history of Joan the Maid that when she had pressed on, scarcely resting by night or day, to win back his kingdom for him, Charles seemed in no hurry to enter upon his honours, but preferred dawdling with his favourites in Touraine; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded to ride to Rheims with Joan. Selfish indulgence, foolish favouritism, petty jealousies—were such things as these to stand in the path from which the Maid had swept all other barriers? Joan, however, was resolute. In hopes of rousing him she withdrew her army into the country, and this retreat had the desired effect. Charles the Laggard allowed himself to be brought into Rheims, and on July 17 Joan, banner in hand, stood by his side in the cathedral while the Archbishop anointed him with the holy oil and crowned him Charles VII. of France. Here, so far as Rheims is concerned, the story of Joan is at an end.

Two papal councils were held at Rheims, in the days when the Gallican Church was rising to its highest power, though it had not yet gone so far as to resent the yoke of the Papacy. Pope Leo IX. in 1049 entered the city in full state to consecrate for Abbot Heremas his newly-built monastery of

Saint Remi, and followed up the consecration by convoking a vast synod composed of nearly every prelate in Europe, archbishops, bishops, abbots, clergy, and laity from every quarter, who sat at Rheims for six days; but their business seems to have been connected only with the usual canonical laws. The later council, which took place in 1119 and was presided over by Calixtus, appears to have occupied itself chiefly with quarrels between Henry of England and Louis of France on matters not even ecclesiastical. It further confirmed the Truce of God which had been imposed at Caen sixty years before, and patched up a peace between the two kings, after an interview between Henry and Calixtus at Gisors, in which the English king took care to make his case good before the Pope and to represent that all his incursions upon the territory of Louis had been made solely from religious motives.

Rheims boasts as one of its early bishops the saint Remigius, who in the fifth century baptised Clovis here with great pomp, and who received from heaven, as the legend has it, a flask of oil wherewith to anoint his king before admitting him into the Church, with the stern injunction, "Burn now that which thou hast worshipped and worship that which thou hast burnt." This flask was pre-

served as one of the Church's most precious relics until the general devastation at the time of the Revolution, when it was broken to pieces by a fanatic. At the time of the consecration of Charles X. it reappeared in a mysterious fashion, and is now shown in the Trésor of the cathedral with various other relics.

It is a sad fact to record that the most beautiful cathedral façade ever built is now almost entirely hidden by scaffolding necessary for the restoration of the building; and, judging by the appearance of the timbering and the paucity of workmen, it is not yesterday that the work was commenced, nor is it by to-morrow that it will be completed.

In the early part of the thirteenth century Robert de Coucy was entrusted with the rebuilding of the cathedral after the complete destruction of the early church by fire. He built it on a simple plan of a vast choir, no transepts, and a rather narrow nave. " Cet édifice a toute la force de la Cathédral de Chartres, sans en avoir la lourdeur; il réunit enfin les veritables conditions de la beauté dans les arts, la puissance et la grace; il est d'ailleurs construit en beaux materiaux, savamment appareillés, et l'on retrouve dans toutes ses parties un soin et une recherche fort rares à une epoque où l'on batissait avec une grande rapidité et souvent avec des res-

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sources insuffisantes."—Viollet-le-Duc. The beautiful portals, "deep and cavernous," record by their thousand sculptures, in a clear and impressive manner, the creation of the world, the whole history of the Old Testament, the life of our Saviour and the redemption of mankind, and convey to all who pass by this great object-lesson of their faith. The tympana of these porches are glazed instead of being filled in with stone. This was done to guard against the possible breaking of the doorway lintel, which, if large, might very well give way under the weight of the superincumbent mass of stone.

Mr. Bond, referring to the deeply recessed porches of the French cathedrals—which, if we exclude the Galilees, find few analogues in the English churches—considers them as lineal descendants of the ancient narthex. "As a rule we did not care to develop the western doorways. The reason may be that our churches are all comparatively low; to give west doorways, therefore, any considerable elevation would be at the expense of the western windows. We needed western light badly in our English naves, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and preferred to develop the western window at the expense of the western doorway, reaching in the end such a façade as that of St. George's, Windsor."

The bays of the nave consist of large clerestory windows filled with glorious deep blue glass, a small triforium and stilted pier arches; a very short chancel of only two bays and chevet hardly gives room for the priests and choristers, the sacrarium is therefore lengthened westwards and projects into the transepts.

To the south of the Cathedral lies the interesting Abbey Church of St. Remi, built in the eleventh century. Many of the French cathedral towns are fortunate in the possession of either an abbey or collegiate church, which existed some two or three centuries before the cathedral itself was built. At Nevers is the church of St. Etienne, at Evreux St. Taurin, at Tours St. Martin. At Angers and other places the old Romanesque basilicas are still to be found. Rheims has for its parent church the basilica of St. Remi. The western towers are Romanesque, and one of them has been left more or less unrestored; the interior has all the impressiveness of the basilica design; the pier arcades and triforium of the nave elevation occupy the whole space up to the springing of the barrel vault, and pilasters are carried down to the pier capitals, where they rest on quaint corbels of very early design. Like churches constructed in the early days, St. Remi has double aisles on either side of the nave; the choir is brought westwards to over-

lap the nave arches, an arrangement often found in short chancelled churches; the east end is peri-apsidal in plan, and the windows are filled with fine blue glass. Ferguson does not give France the credit of having many fine Romanesque churches sufficient to satisfy the splendid tastes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but he makes an exception in the case of St. Remi, and declares it to be "a vast and noble basilica of the early part of the eleventh century, presenting considerable points of similarity to those of Burgundy."

Rheims has enjoyed for a long time popularity amongst travellers. As far back as a hundred and twenty years ago a writer, describing the town and its hotel accommodation, says: "The streets are almost all broad, strait and well built, equal in that respect to any I have seen; and the inn, the Hôtel de Moulinet, is so large and well served as not to check the emotions raised by agreeable objects, by giving an impulse to contrary vibrations in the bosom of the traveller, which at inns in France is too often the case. . . . We have about half a dozen real English dishes that exceed anything in my opinion to be met with in France; by English dishes I mean a turbot and lobster sauce, ham and chicken, a haunch of venison, turkey and oysters, and after these there is an end of an English table.

It is an idle prejudice to class roast beef among them, for there is not better beef in the world than at Paris. . . . The French are cleaner in their persons, and the English in their houses."

To look at Soissons to-day, with its pleasant walks and modern houses, few people would guess it to have played an important part in the history of north-eastern France. Yet that pleasant, modern appearance is itself a proof of what the town endured in earlier days. So fierce was the struggle it had for existence, that the old Soissons has almost worn itself out, and, seen from the outside at least, a new and prosperous town would seem to have taken its place. It might well be called the city of sieges, for few towns have suffered more in this respect. From Roman days down to the Franco-Prussian war the place has seemed good and desirable from soldiers and conquerors, and has had to pay penalty for its splendid position on the Aisne. Both Cæsar and Napoleon recognised its importance as a military station, though a stretch of eighteen hundred years divided the Soissons of one general to the Soissons of the other. Like Lâon, it was for some time a royal seat; and it was here that Clovis the Frank defeated Syagrius, "Romanorum Rex," in 486, and turned a Roman into a Frankish king-

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dom, in which Soissons was for some time the capital. It was in the Abbey of St. Médard, which, except for some subterranean buildings, is now destroyed, that Louis le Débonnair was twice imprisoned by his unnatural children; and on the walls of one of these dungeons have been found some verses, apparently a description of the unfortunate prisoner, but dating only from the fifteenth century.

During the "Hundred Days" Soissons was twice taken and twice retaken in the course of a month. Blücher laid siege to the town in 1814, and but for a sudden surrender on the part of the governor, which gave it into his hands for the time, it would probably have been annihilated by Napoleon, who, as matters turned out, had not time to come up with the Prussian Army. In 1870 another Prussian force entered the town under the Duke of Mecklenburg, after a siege which closes the roll of Soissons' struggles.

On both occasions of our visiting Soissons, we came away with the feeling that the interior of the Cathedral of Notre Dame was even more impressive than that of Rheims. It is, indeed, a worthy rival to its neighbouring sister church; the beautiful proportions of the nave, the simplicity and purity of the carved capitals, the splendid glass, render it one of the most beautiful cathedrals of France. There is a

lovely little chapel in the salle capitulaire at the west end, approached by a cloister, early Gothic in design, with its vaulting supported by two graceful columns, which reminds one of some of the chapter houses of our English cathedrals.

In the Place du Cloitre is a doorway into the Cathedral, with a graceful pediment enclosing a high-springing Gothic tympanum, which is glazed. The mouldings of the arch have alternating crocketted courses, and the capitals are carved to represent vine leaves and grapes. It is not easy to understand why so beautiful a porch should occupy so obscure a position, unless it were in the early days some special entrance for the bishops or for the canons.

On the south side there is a Transition, semi-circular chapel or apse, with a roof lower than that of the rest of the Cathedral. A low clerestory, with three lights, and a small triforium, whose base rakes with the main triforium of the church, form the upper members of the elevation. Below there is a graceful three-arched ambulatory, large and open, spreading backwards over a vaulted chapel. The main arches, simple and delicate in design, complete the whole bay.

Soissons was laid out on a plan which recalls the plan of Noyon. Its south transept, as at Noyon,

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dating from the end of the twelfth century, is rounded and flanked by a circular chapel. Although it is doubtful whether the Cathedral of Soissons was built in the latter part of the twelfth century, or only commenced at that time, it is certain that the nave and choir have the distinct appearance of thirteenth-century design. During this period, however, a kind of uncertainty existed in the planning of the religious edifices. These were constructed on a vast scale, and emancipated themselves from the restricted Romanesque design in obedience to the religious movement which declared itself during the reigns of Louis le Jeune and Philippe Auguste, but the *cathedral* type had not yet been created. The requirements of the nascent ceremonial were not yet fulfilled.

The once magnificent and now ruined Abbey of St. Jean des Vignes is situated on the hill facing the entrance to the town from the station. The west end only remains, surmounted by two towers with spires. "These are a great ornament to the town, and were spared at the entreaty of the citizens when the ruthless democrats destroyed the rest. The towers and the portal are probably of the thirteenth century, the spires more modern." They were much damaged in the Franco-Prussian war, when the town was bombarded.

Chapter Four

ROUEN

ROUEN is a town with two faces, ancient and modern, and the face which it apparently considers the most becoming is the modern one. The ancient, historic face, which the town wore when Joan of Arc rode through, is hidden away as though it were out of fashion, and it is to be found, not in the broad streets, but in lanes, courts and alleys, where the way grows narrow and the houses meet overhead. Rouen, the *chef-lieu* of a department and fourth on the list of French ports, finds more important business on hand than dreaming itself back into the past, and, sacrificing the old life to the new, or, rather, building up a new life round the old, has made of itself a busy, thriving commercial town on the banks of that river up which the beak-headed ships of Rolf the Ganger sailed a thousand years ago to destroy and to conquer. But the town's history is only put aside, not forgotten; indeed, there is too much of it to forget. The records

of Rouen go back before the Roman era in Gaul; the Romans found it as Ratuma or Ratumacos, and then, Romanising the name, as they did everything else, made it into Rotomagus. Even in these early days it was a capital city, the headquarters of the Veliocassian tribe, though not of primary importance. Later, by the end of the third century A. D., we find it the chief city of the province Lugdunensis Secunda, and presently an archiepiscopal see, with an archbishop (now of course a saint) to guide it in matters spiritual.

Saint Mellon and his successors made a goodly record for about five centuries. They were a thoroughgoing race, these early bishops of Rouen, with the zeal of the Christian Fathers fresh upon them, and their very names have a strong, vigorous sound: Avitian, Victrix, Godard, Prétextat, Romain, Ouen, of whom the memory yet remains to Rouen in the names of church, street and tower. After this long line of bishops came a bad time for Rouen. These were the days when the lands to the southwest seemed good and pleasant to the Vikings, the fierce Northmen who in after days were to give their names to Normandy. England had already been over-run with them; first by Jutes and Saxons, then by the fiercer Danes, who in their turn pushed out the Saxons. Only a few miles south of England was

another land just as fair, with a river easily navigable even to the great Northern ships, and thriving towns, rich and full of booty for Northern plunderers. Rouen, peaceful and prosperous, was yet dangerously near the sea, and the year 841 saw the dreaded prow of Oger the Dane coming slowly up the Seine, scattering to right and left all lesser craft, while the terrible war song, which England already knew and feared, rose and fell upon the wind. This was only the beginning. Long fiery years followed, years of ravages, bloodshed and burning, when human laws were in abeyance and the only rule was that of might. Thirty-five years after Oger's invasion came the famous Rolf the Ganger, who laid waste the land anew, until, in 912, Charles the Simple was forced to treat with him at Saint Clair-sur-Epte and to cede to him the duchy of Neustria or Normandy. Rolf then embraced Christianity, and, with the land in his possession, seemed determined to show the despised Franks how a Northman could govern. In point of fact the dukedom, as handed over by Charles, was practically represented by Rouen alone; that is, Rouen apart from the Bessin and the Côtentin, and all the adjacent lands which we now include under the name of Normandy. Further, it did not really belong to Charles. Neustria was part of the great duchy of Paris, and the cession of it to Rolf cut off

Paris from all access to the sea. But that Duke Robert had the sense to hold his tongue, probably from fear of losing Paris as well, there might have been serious results. As it was, Northern France fell into three divisions—the royal city of Lâon, the duchy of Paris, and the settlement of Rolf at Rouen. In these three cities centres most of the subsequent history of Normandy.

As for what Rolf actually did for Rouen, that remains to be seen rather from the after state of affairs. "The founder of the Rouen colony," Freeman says, "is a great man who must be content to be judged in the main by the results of his actions." Rolf is not in the least a vague or shadowy personality, but it is noticeable how he has grown to us out of a great tangle of myths and very little fact. All we have to go upon is the not very authentic Roman de Rou, a few Norse legends, and sundry brief allusions by later French writers, who class him, together with all the Rouennais, under the contemptuous term Pirate. It was a well-ordered, strong, self-dependent colony that he handed down to the long line of his successors. These carried on bravely the traditions of their founder and brought up a hardy race of fighters, although Rouen itself was never thoroughly Teutonic, never at least since the very early days of Rolf's colony. The religion, the language,

and many of the customs of the French at Lâon were grafted on to the Northmen of Rouen by their leader, and thus the town stood as much apart from the rest of Neustria as from the Franks themselves. After the death of Rolf and of his successor, William Longsword, Louis from beyond Sea, of the race of Charlemagne, ruled at Lâon, and cast envious eyes on Normandy, even occupying Rouen for some time during the minority of Richard the Fearless. But although Rouen was ultimately to become a town of France, the time was not yet, and for the present her destiny was averted by an outsider—Harold, King of Denmark, curiously surnamed Blue-tooth. He determined to resist the encroachments of Louis, and finally made him prisoner in the city where he had hoped to establish another capital.

The Norman dukes only deteriorated as rulers when they joined to their domain the crown of England, won by the hardiest and strongest of them all. We remember the passionate, self-willed Robert, son of the Conqueror, and John, called Lackland, that disgrace to the English throne, the worst and likewise the last Norman duke, for the French king, Philippe Auguste, confiscated Normandy, together with other English possessions, and joined it to the crown of France, taking possession of Rouen after a siege in 1204. From this point

the history of Rouen becomes the history of a French and not of a Norman town. As a reward for its submission, Philippe Auguste presented the town with a castle, of which one tower (the Tour Jeanne d'Arc) alone remains standing. Two centuries later, Rouen was in danger from the English. Henry V., during his brilliant campaign in northern France, was not likely to leave to itself such an important place. In 1419 he set up his cannon outside the walls, and proceeded to blockade the town, which opened its gates to him after a six months' siege. Here he also built a castle, which, in the hopefulness born of youth and victory, he intended to use as a royal residence when all France should be at rest under his firm rule. But before the conquest was completed, before he had time to think about any residence other than his camp, came that last fatal sickness at Vincennes, and the castle, which seemed, like all his victories, so sure and so lasting, has been swept off the face of the earth. The years after Henry's death, however, were significant ones for Rouen, now in English hands, and in 1431 we come to the great point in its history, the trial and burning of Joan of Arc in the market-place.

Captured near Compiègne, Joan had been sent to Rouen by the bishop of Beauvais. This was in March. The girl was examined fifteen or sixteen

times, a wearying repetition of question and answer, often going round and round in a circle and never advancing any further. Joan's replies were simple but firm. She persisted in her divine mission, and when asked whether she was in a state of grace or of sin replied, "If I am not in a state of grace, I hope God will make me so. How can I be in much sin while the saints will visit me?" In May matters were delayed by her illness, which was so serious that it seemed for a time as though her enemies were to be defeated by death; but on her recovery learned doctors were sent to her in prison to persuade her of her wrong attitude of mind. Later came a warning from Cauchon, the bishop of Beauvais, to the effect that he was about to have her brought forth and made the object of a public sermon, after which, if she would recant, her safety would be assured. Worn out with her trials, the poor girl declared her submission and signed a recantation, for she saw that the end could not but come soon. A penance of perpetual imprisonment was then imposed upon her, and she submitted passively to the injunctions laid upon her; but at her final abjuration she seemed to be overcome by a sudden access of penitence towards the saints, and resumed her old attitude of determination, declaring that all she had said in submission was said in fear

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of being burned at the stake, of which she had a very natural horror. After this her fate was sealed. Cauchon handed her over to the secular arm, and a few hours later she was led to the stake in the old market-place. It is needless to dwell upon this last scene, because it is one of the stock dramatic occurrences in our history books, which nearly always represent Joan of Arc as suffering trial, torment and death, for the sake of her country with almost unnatural fortitude; but, on the other hand, the more one reads about her, the more clear it becomes that the heroism of the Maid of Orleans, though none the less heroic, was a heroism of the simplest order, born of a pure heart, a steady, straightforward faith in her mission, and only wavering at the last from a very human and girlish horror of so infamous and dreadful a death. And as for her judges, needlessly cruel though they were, yet, as one writer points out, they were almost bound to condemn their prisoner. To try her for sorcery and to burn her as a witch seems of course to our modern eyes not merely horrible, but absurd. Cauchon and his followers, however, did not live in an enlightened age; in their day the "Black Art" was a thing to be dreaded above all others, and death seemed a light thing in comparison with the putting down the power of the Evil One. Others besides Joan of Arc, for generations before

and generations after, had died at the stake for reputed practice of magic; and in the case of the Maid, "to acquit her would have been to accept her celestial mission and place her, with some modern French historians, by the side, nay, in the place, of the Messiah." The trial and burning of Joan cannot be looked upon by the light of a modern world; they are of their time, and that time was, above all things, a superstitious one. And only after her death did France realise what the Domrémy peasant girl had done for her country. The French monarchy, as Louis XI. established it, is perhaps the best monument to her memory. After, and as some say because of, Joan's death English prestige in Rouen began steadily to decline. Two years afterwards, in 1433, came the death of John, Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V., perhaps the only man left with anything of Henry's strength and singleness of purpose. Rouen held out against two attempts at recapture on the part of Charles VII., but in 1449 Somerset was forced to capitulate to a strong expedition, and the English left the town for ever.

By the middle of the next century we find Rouen in the thick of religious troubles. In 1562 it was for six months in Huguenot hands, six months of warfare, oppression and persecution of all Romanists within the walls, with worse to follow;

for when the Royalists recaptured the town they repaid the Huguenots in their own coin, and revenged the Catholic massacres with a terrible revenge. After this the Army of the League held Rouen until, in 1596, Henry IV. of France effected an entrance into the town.

Nowadays the first view of Rouen is a smoky, dreary little station, surrounded by *cochers* and porters in linen blouses; but Arthur Young, an agriculturist of the eighteenth century, visited the old city during his travels, before the days of the "iron way," and he was more fortunate in what he saw from his *diligence:* "The first view of Rouen is sudden and striking; but the road doubling, in order to turn more gently down the hill, presents from an elbow the finest view of a town I have ever seen; the whole city, with all its churches and convents, and its cathedral proudly rising in the midst, fills the vale. The river presents one reach crossed by the bridge, and then, dividing into two fine channels, forms a large island covered with wood; the rest of the vale, full of verdure and cultivation, of gardens and habitations, finish the scene, in perfect unison with the great city that forms the capital feature." To get this view to-day one must climb the long, dusty hill to the convent of Bon Secours, or rather, half-way only, since the city, river and meadows,

show their beauties just as well from a lower point, and the modern convent and church upon the hill-top are not worth a further climb.

From the main street of the town the Cathedral is reached by the Rue de la Grosse Horloge, which leads underneath the archway of the belfry. The Tour St. Romain rises at the end of the street like a tall white guide, and here, suddenly, we find ourselves face to face with the west façade of Notre Dame. The remark made by an American traveller, that he found Rome very much out of repair, is appropriate to many of the French cathedrals. Scheduled as historic monuments, they receive annually a dole from the Government towards maintenance and restoration, but so miserable is this contribution, and so inadequate to the possibility of early completion of the work, that a generation may pass away before the scaffolding is finally removed. The west portal of Rouen is half covered by a forest of timbering. Rheims suffers even more, and the same may be said for Notre Dame at Evreux, St. Urbain at Troyes, and many other cathedrals. Such glimpses, however, as we get of the west front of Rouen show us its glory. Ruskin writing of it says: "It is the most exquisite piece of pure Flamboyant work existing. There is not one cusp, one finial, that is useless, not a stroke of the chisel is in vain; the grace and luxuri-

ance of it all are visible—sensible, rather, even to the uninquiring eye; and all its minuteness does not diminish the majesty, while it increases the mystery of the noble and unbroken vault."

Of the origin of this Flamboyant style a distinguished French writer, M. Enlart, in a paper lately read before the Archæological Institute of Great Britain, has asserted that it is to be found not in France, but in England; and specialising the west front of Rouen, he further states that, in the arrangement of its large bay enclosing the rose window and flanked by tiers of statues, it recalls absolutely the façades, earlier in date, of the cathedrals of Wells, Salisbury and Lichfield.

With one or two exceptions, viz., St. Urbain at Troyes and a chapel in Amiens Cathedral, the Flamboyant style did not appear in France until the last quarter of the fourteenth century, and when it had once taken root, it maintained its integrity until the Renaissance, having the same characteristics from one end of the country to the other. It was not the evolution of any previous French style, but it derived its origin, as above stated, from a style which existed in England a century before. Roughly speaking, the features which distinguish the Flamboyant are, first, the ogee arch which is typical of the style, then special systems of vaulting, and flowing tracery of

windows, forms of arches, "anse de panier," &c., arch mouldings dying into piers without impost or capital, and generally a love of vegetal and undulating decoration. This "decorative caprice" reigned in France in the fifteenth century at a time when the Perpendicular style became universal in England and had completely driven out the ogee arch.

The occupation of the greater part of France by the English in the Hundred Years' War would naturally result in an English influence being noticeable in its buildings, the contact of nations producing an exchange of art as of commerce. The Flamboyant may therefore be said to be the by-product of the Hundred Years' War.

There is documentary evidence that both at Rouen and at Evreux the foreign occupation did not interfere with the work going on at the cathedrals; indeed, at Rouen, two canons of York were received with the greatest courtesy by the chapter, and contributions were made by the English towards the completion of the Cathedral. The domination of the English was no hindrance to the progress of art in France, and as soon as the latter had freed itself and realised its national unity, its architects applied themselves heart and soul to the development of this style which was "borrowed from the enemy."

A long list can be made of buildings where the ogee arch and other typical features obtained in England, from the end of the thirteenth to the latter part of the fourteenth century, during which time no parallels existed in France. One of the most ancient examples is Queen Eleanor's Cross at Northampton (1291-1294), where Flamboyant features show themselves.

The tomb of William de la Merche at Wells (1302), Aymer de Valence at Westminster (1323), and many other early fourteenth-century examples, furnished by almost every cathedral, testify to the prevalence of the passion for the ogee motive of decoration. These are given in detail by M. Enlart as irrefragable proofs of the English origin of the Flamboyant style.

The interior of the Cathedral of Rouen is considered by Mr. Bond to be curiously Romanesque in plan. Its nave bays are four-storied, an upper and lower pier arch with small triforium and clerestory. The upper pier arch might also be regarded as a triforium, for a passage-way runs along the sill of the arch and is continued behind the main piers on an elegant group of shafted corbels. These were originally intended to support a vault of a lower aisle. The east end is more dignified and has simpler factors, clerestory, triforium and pier arch. The

glass is magnificent, dating from the thirteenth century.

South of the Cathedral a narrow street leads eventually to the river by way of the *halles,* the Place Haute-Vieille-Tour and its sister of the Basse-Vieille-Tour. The first square is a large open place, fenced round with solid stone buildings, and having on its south side the Chapelle de la Fierte Saint-Romain. With this monument, on which a flight of steps leads up to a Renaissance chapel of six stages, is connected a curious *privilège* and legend, both of which have of course been recorded before, but which are interesting enough to bear repetition. The charter for this privilege was accorded to the chapter of Rouen Cathedral by King Dagobert—he who founded the Abbey of Saint Denis. Each year, on Ascension Day, the archbishop was empowered to release a man condemned to death; and therefore every Ascension Day the good folk of Rouen flocked into the streets to watch the procession of the Fierte Saint-Romain. First came the solemn visit of the arm of the Church to the arm of the Law, with the annual formal proclamation of the privilege. Then every prison in the city must be searched, and every prisoner put on oath and examined as to the cause of his imprisonment. Finally the election of the

RUE DE L' HORLAGE, ROUEN

favoured prisoner was put to the vote by the chapter, his name sent to the Palais de Justice, and the paper duly signed and sealed, after which the "messe du prisonnier" was celebrated in the Salle des Pas-Perdus; and finally, the prisoner himself was called before his lords, secular and spiritual, and formally examined; he then confessed to the chaplain of Saint-Romain, his fetters were removed, and he followed the archbishop to the Place Haute-Vieille-Tour, where, in the Chapelle de la Fierte, a solemn service made him once more a free man. A solemn and magnificent procession then bore him, crowned with flowers, to the great thanksgiving Mass, after which he was free to go whither he would. No less curious is the legend connected with the ceremony. It is said that while Romain was bishop of Rouen a terrible dragon laid waste all the land and devoured the inhabitants.

No one dared to approach this monster, who was known as the Gargoyle, until Saint Romain, armed only with his sanctity, set out to subdue it, accompanied by a condemned criminal—the prototype of those who were released on Holy Thursday—when the Gargoyle at once submitted and, with the episcopal stole round its neck, was led by the prisoner to the water's edge. The sequel does not reflect much credit upon the bishop—at least, it seems rather of

the nature of meanness to conjure the beast into good nature and then to push it, all unawares, into the river to drown. At the head of the Portail de la Calende, the north porch of the Cathedral, stands the figure of Saint Romain, and under his feet, with the stole round its neck, is the Gargoyle, craning its head round to look into the face of the bishop with the expression of a very hideous but very faithful dog—a most disarming expression if it be meant to represent that worn by the Gargoyle before it was sent to its death! In memory of this occurrence, the standard of the dragon was borne in the processions at the *privilège*—banners similar to those of the dragons at Bayeux and Salisbury. The legend, however, appears to be of later date than the festival, which is mentioned certainly as early as the twelfth century, and continued to delight the Rouennais as late as 1790.

The Abbey Church of St. Ouen is placed at the head of the collegiate churches of France so far as its beauty and perfection of architecture is concerned. In its proportion of nave, transepts and choir it is considered to outshine Cologne, its great rival and contemporary. The vast area of clerestory and glazed triforium recalls the interior arrangement of Amiens. The triforium passage is worked between the lower mullions of the windows, which are dupli-

cated; but, as is pointed out by Mr. Bond, care was taken that the inner and the outer tracery of the windows should be different in pattern. Freeman says: "St. Ouen goes further to unite the two forms of excellence"—external outline and internal height—"than any other church, French or English," and states that "St. Ouen is the loftiest church in the world that has a real central tower."

This central lantern is, according to Ferguson, a very noble feature and appropriate to its position; unhappily it does not enjoy the admiration of all writers: Ruskin condemns the false buttresses of the tower, which he describes as merely a hollow crown, and declares that it needs no more buttressing than does a basket.

The third church of Rouen is that of St. Maclou. Its most noticeable feature is the west end, which terminates in a very beautiful porch of pentagonal form, and might be taken as another example of the rich Flamboyant ornament seen in the western façade of the Cathedral. The church itself is a complete specimen of its period, and dates from the latter half of the fifteenth century.

On the north side of the church, in the Rue Martainville, is the Aître de St. Maclou, an old parish cemetery of the fifteenth century. There is a small quadrangle, an old disused stone well with an iron

crucifix in the centre, and round all runs a cloister with two low stories, timbered in black and white, with the famous "Danse Macabre" carved on the lower beams. It is now used as a school for the poor children of Rouen, and on working days is full of life—the life of a growing generation going on side by side with the relics of a dead and half-forgotten past, for the quaint seriousness of an old fifteenth-century builder has traced upon the lintel a constant reminder of death and the grave—skulls, bones, spades, and here and there a grim skeleton Death bearing away a human figure in his arms. Many of the most beautiful figures are headless, not from the ravages of a symbolic Death, but from those of a very real and equally unsparing hand—the hand of the Revolution.

During the Franco-Prussian War Rouen had unhappily to record its own chapter of reverses, when the French determined to dislodge Manteuffel. Faidherbe's army, together with the army of the Havre and General Roy's army of the South, had planned out an admirable scheme, which, however, was lacking in one essential, actual execution. Manteuffel was to be routed and driven out of Rouen. The Prussians were equally confident of success, and it is said that Manteuffel ordered his train to take him to Amiens to be ready next day at twelve o'clock,

RUE ST. ROMAIN, ROUEN

by which time he felt sure that he would have disposed of the enemy.

"The battle began before daylight, the pursuit lasted until after dark and was resumed on the following morning; but the victory was virtually gained when the first blow was struck, or, rather, the first shot fired. Here and there, on the road along which they were driven, or on the wooded heights by which the road is in many places commanded, they made a desperate resistance, but it was throughout a question, in regard to the French, of the rate of retreat, never a question of retreat and advance."

Chapter Five

EVREUX AND LISIEUX

WE left Rouen by a "quick" train, that is, one which occupied itself in stopping at every wayside station that caught its fancy. However, this mattered little, as the road to Evreux runs through the most enchanting country, and we had plenty of time to admire it. Wonderful woods stretch over the slope of the hills and widen out into valleys scattered with old timbered farm-houses, and here and there a château, seen amongst the trees of its *propriété;* little poplar-shaded rivers run through the fields, decked in holiday garlands of loosestrife and meadowsweet and unmolested by any eager *pêcheur,* whether boy with string and bent pin, or more "compleat angler" with rod and line. The Seine, divested of barge and steam tug, greets one by glimpses now and then; and after leaving the tunnel before Elbœuf, it bursts suddenly into view—a wide sweep of river, with the busy little town by its side. Then the valley closes in all at once,

and we run under the shadow of chalk cliffs with steep scarped faces and deep caverns, into whose blackness we may almost peer from the carriage window. Lastly comes a run up on to high ground again; and there below, shut in by hills, with three towers rising from its low roofs, is Evreux. The railway takes a great curve from one side of the town to the other before running into the station, so that the place passes in review before one; and it is an impressive review, seen as we first saw it, in the light of a summer sundown, a purple haze, "mystic, wonderful," hanging like a veil over the little town.

Besides the Cathedral and the bishop's palace, Evreux possesses little that strikes one as being either very old or very new; a cheerful, clean mediocrity prevails all through the town, which, nevertheless, dates back to very early times. Remains of a Roman settlement have been discovered some little distance away, at Vieil Evreux, then known as Mediolanum Aulercolum, and afterwards as Eburovices, whence is derived the modern name of Evreux. A bishopric was founded at Evreux by St. Taurin, during the great movement towards Christianity in the fourth century; later, Clovis destroyed the Roman encampment and founded a town of his own, which in its turn was burnt and pillaged by the Northmen in the ninth century. After this it probably shared the bounty

of its former scourge, Duke Rolf, and became part of the Norman duchy and a Naboth's vineyard to Count Thibaut of Chartres, who did actually take possession of it in 962, though Richard the Fearless must have reclaimed the town, as he presented the "Comté d'Evreux," which was to pass later into the family of Montfort l'Amaury, to one of his younger sons. Henry I. set fire to Evreux for some mysterious reason, but with the full consent of the bishop, who must have had peculiar ideas on the subject of his pastoral duties; and in the reign of Cœur-de-Lion John Lackland gave it up to the French Crown, and afterwards, filled with remorse, or more probably with alarm, at the news that his brother was returning from Palestine and might demand what had become of Evreux, ordered a general massacre of the French garrison quartered there and ran away himself, leaving his wretched English subjects to bear the brunt of the French king's wrath when the story should come to his knowledge.

After several vicissitudes of this kind, Evreux was in 1404 finally joined to the Crown of France, though it still seems to have been tossed about in the most confusing way, and we hear of it as belonging now to France, now to Navarre, then sold to the Darnley Stuarts and back again to France; and so on until Napoleon, having divorced Josephine, pre-

EVREUX

sented her out of his imperial bounty with a part of the Comté d'Evreux as a compensation for her trials. The modern town, however, has not at all the air of having been the plaything of kings and states. The only noticeable traces of its ancient warfare are the machicolated walls of the bishop's palace, and the moat below, running between the palace and the Boulevard Chambaudin. The moat is now filled up by a kitchen-garden—a striking example of how peace has succeeded war in Evreux—but it is easy to imagine how it must have looked in the old days; the dark, still water, the steep walls rising up to their turrets, the treacherous machicolations, apparently ornamental but in reality only too useful, and above it all the grey towers of Notre Dame.

The interior of the Cathedral extends in date from the Romanesque to the Renaissance period. The nave bays offer examples of what is known as "skeleton construction"; they consist of a Romanesque pier arch (said to be the remaining work of Lanfranc) surmounted by a large clerestory and small glazed triforium; the clerestory wall, as Mr. Bond points out, is so shallow that it "ceases to exist *quâ* wall." It is in some way analogous to the choir of Gloucester in its "attenuated construction." The lights are filled in with glass, apparently of the late fifteenth century. As Whewell says, the transepts

and part of the choir are most remarkable and most ancient examples of the Flamboyant style. The choir, burnt down in 1346, was restored in the second half of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; the transept was finished about 1450. The English took possession of the town in 1418, but this did not in any way hinder the work from being carried on. In 1422 Tchan le Boy was made *maître de l'œuvre,* and to him is attributed the Lantern Tower, springing from a beautiful vaulted base. The *vitrail* of the Saintes Maries and its mouldings, probably designed by Le Boy, follows the English type.

Evreux is, according to Whewell, "a mixture of Flamboyant and Renaissance. The Flamboyant dies down gradually into Italian, especially in the series of wooden screens to the chapels round the choir, where every sort of mixture is noticeable." In some of the glass and on the outside panels of the west doors the artists have attempted to show their knowledge of the newly-discovered science of perspective, but they pay little regard to the vanishing point. On the north side, the windows of the aisle, with high pediments cutting the balustrades, are very beautiful examples of the prevailing style. The western towers "are to be considered as Gothic conceptions expressed in classical phrases."

In the far west of the town, at the end of the Rue

Josephine, lies Saint Taurin, the second church of Evreux, in its quiet little square, screened by magnificent elm-trees, a square and solid-looking building, with a good deal of work that is very interesting and undoubtedly ancient. Originally the church formed part of a Benedictine Abbey founded in 1026; an ancient crypt remains, built, as purports to be the case with so many churches, round the tomb of the patron, Saint Taurin, who in the fourth century brought Christianity into the town, and whose story may be read in the fifteenth-century glass of the choir. His relics are preserved in a wonderful carved casket of the thirteenth century, which may be seen by the curious in the church treasury. In three bays of the south nave the vaulting ends in some curious stone carving in the form of grotesque heads, which belong to the sixteenth century.

"Once a cathedral, always a cathedral" was the theory which led us to Lisieux *en route* for Bayeux. It seemed almost as absurd that the great church of St. Pierre should not be counted a cathedral as that St. Etienne and the other churches of Caen should be churches and nothing more. In this respect, indeed, Lisieux takes precedence of Caen, for until the days of the Empire she had a bishopstool of her own, while Caen never actually possessed the dignity of an episcopal see.

Lisieux is one stage further on the high road between French Normandy and Norman Normandy, and is some way over the Norman border; at Rouen, at Evreux even, we were in France, but here all around us, as at Bayeux, are signs and tokens of a land more closely akin to our own, and we feel that we have at last reached Normandy proper. Lisieux, both for its Cathedral and for itself, is full of interest. The general impression is that of a bright little place with a great deal of life—the life of shop and market—to be seen on all sides, but none of the modern commercial spirit, such as dominates a place like Rouen. There is a very mediæval air about Lisieux, and the old houses, of which there are plenty, are to be found not in out-of-the-way alleys, but in the chief streets. The Grande Rue has one magnificent specimen, now a boot-maker's shop, opposite the Rue du Paradis; down at the bottom of the hill, in the Rue de Caen, is a house where Charlottle Corday spent the night on the way to Paris to fulfil her terrible mission, and the Rue aux Fèvres, where one seems to have walked straight into the Middle Ages, contains the "Manoir de François I^{er}," a beautiful sixteenth-century house, from whose name one would at least suppose that François once spent a night there, whereas he probably never went near the place, and its chief claim to the title lies in the abundance of

THE TOWER OF EVREUX

carved salamanders on the splendid house-front, and even these are mixed up with apes and other grotesque creatures.

The Church of St. Jacques stands almost at the top of the hill, between the Rue St. Jacques and the Marché au Beurre, where most of the straggling streets converge. It was built in the last years of the fifteenth century, and is a fairly complete specimen of the French style of that period, standing upon a long, wide flight of steps, with a balustrade running completely round the building. The floor inside follows the slope of the hill, and slants upwards from west to east.

The church contains some half-effaced frescoes on the nave pillars, and a very curious old painting on wood, representing the miraculous translation of St. Ursin's relics to Lisieux in 1055. This picture hangs in a chapel in the south aisle, dedicated to St. Antony of Padua, not in St. Ursin's own chapel, which is on the other side of the nave.

Lisieux looks like a town with a history, and, like most French towns, goes back to Roman times, when it was known as Noviomagus or as Lexovii, from the Gallic tribe which had settled there. Rolf obtained it as part of his Norman duchy; Geoffrey Plantagenet and Stephen of Blois fought over it and between them reduced the town to a terrible state of

famine, for which Henry II. of England tried to make amends by causing his own marriage with Eleanor of Poitou to take place in the Cathedral. Thomas à Becket took refuge at Lisieux on one occasion and left behind him some vestments, which are proudly displayed in the chapel of the *Hospice*.

During the Hundred Years' War and the religious quarrels two centuries later, Lisieux shared the fate of other towns as regards sieges and conflagrations; but after this we hear little of its history, and may assume that it emerged from its trials much as we see it now—busy and peaceful once more, with leisure to turn again to the old-world town routine which makes the Lisieux of to-day.

The interior of St. Pierre, according to Whewell, "bears a great resemblance to Early English work, although the French square abacus is still to be found here. The round abacus is noticeable in the arcades under the windows of the choir, giving quite an English look to this portion of the church." There is at the west end a large interior porch, which is referred to by most writers on architecture. The two towers vary in their openings, one having lancet lights and the other small round-headed windows. The nave is large, consisting of eight bays, and built, it is said, about 1160. The tympana of the choir triforium arches are filled with plate tracery, quatre-

ST. JACQUES LISIEUX

foil and cusped. The most beautiful interior elevation, however, is that of the north wall of the transept. Here the three large upper lights remind one of the well-known "Five Sisters" at York. The lower double-light window is deeply recessed, with elegant clusters of engaged shafts supporting the graceful mouldings round the opening. The transept also possesses an eastern aisle, which is said to be a rarity in France.

The church itself is unfortunately situated in a corner of the *Place,* and a large building which abuts on its north-west tower detracts considerably from its beauty and importance. The south transept door opens into the Rue du Paradis—a name which one is glad to see preserved in the neighbourhood of French cathedrals. It may refer to a garden or close which has been absorbed by surrounding buildings, or to a closed-in porch, the upper stories of which have been used either as libraries, or as lodgings for chantry-priests.

Chapter Six

BAYEUX

WE read of Bayeux—before going there—as a place where many went but few stayed, because of the towns behind and before; memories of Caen and Lisieux, expectations of Coutances and Saint-Lô, which dimmed the modest light of little Bayeux. It is curious, however, that this should be the case, when we remember how important was the position it held in the history of mediæval Normandy. It was the chief town of the country known as the Bessin, a district lying immediately to the west of Rolf's duchy at Rouen, and the conquest of which was the next stage on his westward road. One interesting point here is that the inhabitants of the Bessin, even as far back as the later days of the Roman Empire, were not Celts but Saxons—men of the same race as Rolf, who took possession of Bayeux in 924, and established there a Danish settlement, which, as Freeman says, was always a thorn in the side of the Celts, and provoked many attacks

from its Breton neighbours. Saxon and Dane made common cause against the enemies both to the east and to the west; and thus at Bayeux there grew up a strong Teutonic colony, without the Frankish element which, as we have seen, worked such changes at Rouen. The old Norse religion obtained here long after eastern Normandy had become Christian; and the Bayeux colony bore much more affinity to the Danish settlements in England than to that at Rouen, the nucleus of Normandy, which was hardly Norman at all, whereas, as Freeman remarks, "the acquisition of Bayeux gave Normandy all that created and preserved the genuine Norman character." For this reason William Longsword chose that his son, Richard the Fearless, should be brought up at Bayeux rather than at Rouen—so that, living amongst his own people, he might in time come to be not only Duke of Normandy, but also Duke of the Normans.

The Bessin still preserves this ancient distinction, and both country and inhabitants bear a great resemblance to those of England. Bayeux itself is a quiet country town, built up one low hill and down another—a town of long streets and grey-shuttered houses, possessing three principal interests —the Cathedral, the Seminary Chapel and the Tapestry. It is also the birthplace of Alain

Chartier, minstrel and court-poet to Charles VII., and author of that curious document, the "Curiale," whose best praise lies in the fact that it was one of the earliest books selected for publication by Caxton. It is a brilliant and vivid picture of the court life of the time; and the story says of Maître Alain that he intended it as an answer to a letter from his brother Jean, enquiring whether he, too, could not find fame at court. Certainly it looks as if the favoured brother wished to keep to himself the good things of life, for although he paints in brilliant colours, Alain does not spare the follies and vices of court life, and one cannot help feeling that his object was to put the more obscure Jean "off the scent."

Little is known of the circumstances either of Chartier's birth or his death, though of his actual life several records exist. He is known to have been one of the most brilliant men of letters of his time, probably rivalled only by Charles d'Orléans, and—since a court minstrel is always a picturesque figure—he has come down to our times surrounded by a certain halo of romance. His many writings, both in prose and verse, are very little known to modern readers, though he had many disciples among the men of his own time, and his "Bréviaire des Nobles" was considered such a standard

for courtly manners that it was apportioned out, so Jean de Masles tells us, into daily passages for the youth of the court—that court of which Chartier knew every turn, every corner, every glittering folly and every dark intrigue—to learn by heart. A modern statue in his native town at the end of the Rue Général de Daïs shows him in furred cap and flowing robe, a pen in one hand, and in the other a sheaf of papers from which he is apparently declaiming some gay rondel or pathetic ballad.

His house in the Rue des Bouchers is also shown, with an inscription to the effect that he was born there with his two brothers, Jean and Guillaume; but it has now become a very small and dingy shop, and one goes away with a feeling that a link with the past has been broken. But although Chartier's house would scarcely be singled out as an ancient landmark, one or two there are in the quiet grey line of the Bayeux streets that seem to belong to a better time, a time when watchmen walked the streets by night and armed men clattered down them by day: and among these stands out the really beautiful gabled specimen at the corner of the Rue St. Martin. Here cross-timbers, black and white, tall gables and lattice windows call for our admiration on our road to the Cathedral; and

nearer the great church itself is the sixteenth-century Maison du Gouverneur, and another "Maison d'Adam." It is curious how often street and house names in France reverted in this way to our common origin. In countless places do we find Maisons d'Adam (Eve sometimes has a share in the patronage of the house), with their figures of Adam, Eve and the Serpent; sometimes, as at Rouen, a whole street bears the name of the Père Adam. It would be interesting to know if this is a cropping up of the Revolutionary *êgalité*—a wooden form of

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

If so, the idea is certainly before its time, since many of these houses and streets were built, and presumably named, when the Revolution was as yet in its cradle.

The Lanterne des Morts, a quaint structure with a quaint title, raises a perforated cone on the south-west of the Cathedral. This mediæval lamp-post had it name from the fact that it was lighted whenever a funeral procession passed through the town; and it must certainly have added to the impressiveness of the scene, especially when, as was often the case in old days, the burial took place in

the dead of night, and this red glowing beacon towered above the low roofs like a great funeral torch as the chanting of the monks broke the stillness, and the sombre figures with their burden moved into the church.

Returning to the three principal attractions of Bayeux noticed above, the Cathedral—the only church of importance—falls naturally into the first place. Entering by one of the five beautiful gabled doorways, one stands on a platform above the level of the nave floor. The standpoint being thus raised, the length of the church is apparently enhanced. There is a church in Rome and another at Modena where this *coup d'œil* is effected by the street level being some twenty or thirty steps above the nave.

The bays of the nave, especially in their lower compartments, are very remarkable. Above the twelfth-century round-headed pier arches, and reaching to the very small triforium balustrade, the whole wall face is decorated with beautiful diaper carving. This surface decoration is to be found in Westminster Abbey, but not in the same varied richness as on the walls and spandrils at Bayeux. On one of the bays the old corbels which carried the organ in the thirteenth century still remain. The clerestory windows are beautiful in proportion and constructed

in double planes. The spandrils and tracery of the choir arches show examples of early plate tracery.

In the treasury one of the most interesting pieces of furniture is a large *armoire* containing church vestments, and another example of early joinery is to be found in the fine door in the south aisle. Here huge planks, some eighteen feet in length, are fastened together by iron bands and hinges, without framework of any kind. The two western towers, together with the crypt, are said to be the only parts remaining of the old church of Odo, brother of the Conqueror.

We made two unsuccessful attempts to obtain entrance to the Seminary Chapel; but as it is said to be a very beautiful specimen of early Gothic, the short description given by Whewell may perhaps act as an incentive to other visitors, and spur them on to greater importunity than we used. He considers it to be "the most elegant and complete example of the Early English style. The details resemble those of the Temple Church in London, in the shafts, capitals, vaulting, &c. The arrangement of the east end is remarkable, uniting as it does in a considerable degree the effect of the polygonal apse and of the east windows, having diverging vaulting but with eastern lights."

At the present day it is upon the Tapestry that

A STREET CORNER, BAYEUX

Bayeux bases its chief claim to notoriety, and the first feeling is one of surprise if not of disappointment on finding that it can hardly be reckoned as tapestry at all. This impression, however, soon disappears when we come to consider the interest and importance of the work, not merely as a local but also as an historic monument. Many and fierce have been the controversies as to its origin—all the more so from the fact that it was not brought to light until (speaking relatively) within recent times, so that little can be gained from history or tradition, or, indeed, from anything beyond the internal evidence. The form of the Tapestry is well known to all visitors of Bayeux (and without going so far afield, a very accurate copy may be seen at the South Kensington Museum)—a long, narrow piece of linen, embroidered in crewel work of five different colours, setting forth the conquest of England by Duke William. In 1724 M. Lancelot found a copy of some of the scenes among the papers of the Intendant of Normandy, and concluding after a close investigation that everything pointed to the work being contemporary with the events depicted, communicated his discovery to the Académie Française. Montfaucon carried on the investigation, and finally discovered the original of Lancelot's copy in a length of tapestry which was hung round the Cathedral at Bayeux on great festi-

vals. The early authorities seem to have entertained no doubt of its being contemporary, but later accounts set forth theories so widely different from one another, and in some cases so flatly contradictory, that it is impossible to enter into them within a very limited space. Following the authority of Freeman, who treats the subject in a very complete manner in his "History of the Norman Conquest" (vol. iii. Appendix, note A), we may assume that the "Toilette du Duc Guillaume," as it is called in an ecclesiastical inventory at Bayeux of the fifteenth century, is contemporary with the history of the Conqueror, but is more likely to have been connected with Odo than with Queen Matilda. This theory is supported by the prominence given in the various scenes to "Turold, Vital, and Wadard," who are mentioned in Domesday Book as vassals of the bishop, but are in themselves quite unimportant, which would suggest that the original interest of the Tapestry was intended to be a purely local one, for the Bishop of Bayeux alone. Freeman thinks it possible that the work may have been done in England. When Napoleon became First Consul he sent for the tapestry from Bayeux, and displayed it in the Louvre as an incentive to Frenchmen to conquer England as Duke William had conquered it some seven centuries before. After this it returned to Bayeux, and was

formerly shown to the curious visitor rolled on a windlass; but later days have treated it more reverently, and it is now preserved under glass in a condition of colour and texture which, considering its age and its adventures, it little short of marvellous.

Side by side with that of the Conqueror, the other memory which Bayeux calls up is undoubtedly that of the greatest bishop the little city ever knew, who governed it during half a century of Normandy's most stirring history. Odo's life-story stands out among those of the men of his time, indeed, much as does the life-story of his half-brother, Duke William. In an age when bishops wielded sword as well as mace, he outstripped his contemporaries not only in ecclesiastical power, but in the highest of temporal ambitions. Like Wolsey, he aimed at being Pope above all his other goals. In the meantime Odo despised no stepping-stones to power. He became Bishop of Bayeux in 1048; fought with William at Senlac, "in full armour by the side of his brother and sovereign, as eager and ready as William himself to plunge in wherever in the fight danger should press most nearly," and in the following year, when fear of foreign invasions called the new king back to Normandy, he was left in joint command of England with Fitz-Osbern, and given the title of Earl of Kent. Thus we see that Odo had two distinct provinces—a

secular one in England, a spiritual one in Normandy —and his rule seems to have differed according to the province in which he found himself. As Earl of Kent, the native chroniclers declare he was harsh, oppressive and tyrannical; his followers were lawless, and were dreaded through his territory. The chroniclers of Bayeux, however, show him up as a munificent prelate, generous in giving, a patron of "learning and good conversation," and, above all, a benefactor to his see in that he rebuilt the church where his flock worshipped, and where the crypt and part of the western towers still bear witness of his work. William of Poitiers, the chronicler of all that William did, extends his panegyrics to Odo, and declares that he was appreciated and beloved both in Normandy and England. But this probably results, Freeman points out, from the immense admiration of William the chronicler for William the duke, which would probably—so partial were historians in those days—lead him to believe that not only was the Conqueror impeccable, but his lieutenants also.

Caen follows as a natural corollary to Bayeux, and once one has embarked upon a journey in the Bessin and Calvados districts, it seems almost invidious to stay in one town without paying a visit to the others, both being so intimately bound up with the story of the Conqueror.

The churches of Caen have never had any pretence to episcopal dignity, and it is curious that this city, richer in great churches than any town in Normandy, should never have been raised to a bishopric, more especially considering the number of cathedral towns which beside such a city as this rank as hardly more than large villages, and yet which, because they possess one church of importance, must take precedence of Caen and other bishopless cities. Apart from its ecclesiastical dignity, however, Caen should be visited because it is a town both ancient and beautiful, and in memory of the great duke, who, English sovereign though he was, yet seems to come before us much more vividly in Normandy than in England. It was the Conqueror who made Caen—perhaps not as it is to-day, but at any rate as it was in the Middle Ages. Caen, or Cadomum as the Normans found it, was a tiny parish lying on the outskirts of the Bessin district, burnt probably by the first Norman invaders, and likewise included in Rolf's conquests, but of too little importance either to be harmed by the one or benefited by the other. Then arose the discussion about William's marriage with Matilda, the dispensation granted by the Pope for their breach of canonical law and the conditions under which William might keep his wife—that the duke and the duchess should each build an abbey

church and foundation within the town of Caen, that of William to serve for men, that of Matilda for women; and forthwith the little town became a centre of attraction, alive with workmen, visited no doubt from time to time by the duke and duchess themselves in order that they might see how the work was going forward. The Abbaye aux Dames was the first to be consecrated. Matilda wished to hurry on the work, probably, as one writer says, from feminine impatience to complete her task. The church finished under her auspices, however, was too quickly erected to be more than a fragment, "simply so much as was necessary for the devotions of the sisterhood," and its real completion belongs to a day later than the time of Matilda, though her original plan was in all probability carried out to the end. William, however, took his time over the building of his church, and watched it to the finish. It was consecrated, with the exception of the two western towers, by Lanfranc in 1077, and stands to-day, in its strength, simplicity and majesty, a fitting and lasting memorial of the man who ruled England and Normandy and kept them with hand of iron.

"The church of William, vast in scale, bold and simple in its design, disdaining ornament, but never sinking into rudeness, is indeed a church worthy of

its founder. The minster of Matilda, far richer even in its earliest parts, smaller in size, more delicate in workmanship, has nothing of the simplicity and grandeur and sense of proportion which marks the work of her husband. The one is the expression in stone of the imperial will of the conquering duke; the other breathes the true spirit of his loving and faithful duchess."

The foundation of the two great abbeys soon led to a growing population outside their walls. Houses were built around the Trinité on the hill-top and around Saint Etienne in the plain; various trades sprang up, we may suppose, within the town; and a castle—always a patent of nobility to any town—was built on the hill, where William might lodge during his visits to Caen. These visits became more and more frequent until Caen was elevated almost to the rank of a royal residence; and even when Duke William became King of England, he found nothing in his new kingdom so pleasant as the little city under the hill. He built walls all round the town; he conceded to the inhabitants commercial privileges such as were enjoyed by Rouen and other large cities, together with the right of holding fairs, though the fairs of Caen never attained such celebrity as did those at Troyes; and finally, it was through the streets of Caen that his funeral train passed, bearing the

Conqueror to his long rest in the church which he had built in the city which he had loved.

"The death of a king in those days came near to a break-up of all civil society. Till a new king was chosen and crowned, there was no longer a power in the land to protect or to chastise. All bonds were loosed; all public authority was in abeyance; each man had to look to his own as best he might." Thus is described the state of feudal England and feudal Normandy after the death of the Conqueror at Rouen. A state of the utmost confusion prevailed; and apparently quite as an afterthought, masses were offered for the soul of him who so lately had kept all in so strict an order. This confusion was not the outcome of any personal disrespect to the dead king; it was simply a reaction consequent on the removal of the one great headstone, the one great reliance of the realms on both sides of the Channel. In the meantime the body of William was borne to Caen to await burial. A Norman knight of the name of Herlwin took upon himself the task of ordering funeral rites proper to the degree of such a man, since neither kinsfolk nor servants seemed willing to stir a finger. Once at Caen, however, the Conqueror's faithful followers received their dead master with all the honour and respect which they had shown to him while living. The procession started in full pomp towards

Saint Stephen's and was met by the Abbot Gilbert, his clergy, and a number of laymen. The monks fell into file, the solemn chant arose; but suddenly the orderly progress was arrested by an event as startling as any in the lifetime of the great man they were burying. As the crowds filled the streets, a fire broke out in one of the houses; and as in the Middle Ages fires were easier to kindle and harder to quench than in later days, the flames spread along from house to house, till it seemed as though a sheet of fire were pursuing the Conqueror to his grave. Soon only the monks remained of the great company that had set out from the monastery, and they went on apparently as though nothing had happened, whilst the clergy, the lay helpers and the rest of the crowd dispersed to save their belongings from destruction, the dead man forgotten in the very real and living present need. "Thus were the candles of William's churching at Mantes avenged by the candles of his burial at Caen."

At Saint Stephen's were waiting a goodly company of bishops, Lanfranc of Canterbury, Odo of Bayeux, William's brother; Gilbert of Evreux, the preacher; and Gilbert of Lisieux, learned in medicine; with Geoffroy de Montbray, bishop of Coutances; and the saintly pupil of Lanfranc, Anselm of Bec. The scene which followed is an interesting one. The funeral mass was sung, the body being

borne along the nave and chancel up to the altar; then Gilbert of Lisieux spoke the funeral oration, setting forth, as was the custom, the tale of William's battles and conquests, of his glory in war and his firm rule in peace, of his defence of the Church and his zeal against her enemies. "Pray, O people, that his sins may be forgiven before God, and if he had sinned against you in anything, forgive him that also yourselves." At the close of the oration all heads turned towards Ascelin, the son of Arthur, as he stood forth, and forbade the body to be buried in land which the Conqueror had wrested from his father. "I . . . claim the land; I challenge it as mine before all men, and in the name of God I forbid that the body of the robber be covered with my mould, or that he be buried within the bounds of mine inheritance." Certainly here seemed some just impediment. An inquiry, necessarily brief because of the time and place, was held, and Ascelin's witness proved true; and then and there a sum was paid down to the claimant. Thus the great abbey which he had built was not lawfully his own until the day of his burial.

Another memory of the Conquerer in Caen remains in the Truce of God which he imposed upon the Seigneurs of Normandy. Comparing this "Trenga Dei" with the Crusades, Freeman says: "The call to the Crusade fell in with every temper

BAYEUX FROM THE MEADOWS

of the times; the proclamation of the Truce of God fell in with only one, and that its least powerful side. Good and bad men alike were led by widely different motives to rush to the Holy War. The men who endeavoured to obey the Truce of God must often have found themselves the helpless victims of those who despised it." The Truce was preached first in Aquitaine in 1054, and Normandy was almost the last country to receive it. When it reached the north of France it was in a somewhat different form to that in which it had started. The early preachers began by denouncing all private warfare; but even in an age quickly fired by enthusiasm for a new movement, and more especially for a religious movement, obedience to this decree was found to be impossible. Men had hated one another too long to leap suddenly into a state of perpetual love; and the decree was modified, imposing abstention from private quarrels from Wednesday evening to Monday morning in each week. Even this seemed at first too much for the Norman spirit—"the luxury of destruction was dear to the Norman mind"—but the preaching of Bishops Richard and Hagano at length took effect, and at Caen, in 1042, was convoked the famous Council which was formally to receive the Truce, and command its observance all through the land.

Since then more than eight centuries have gone by; and yet to-day no place seems to breathe forth the spirit of the great duke as does Caen. In the castle on the cliffs at Falaise he was born, at Rouen was his seat and capital, at Bayeux his victories are preserved in a lasting memorial; but at Caen he lived and lies buried, at Caen he built houses and churches and city walls, and at Caen we may still think of him, not as the usurper of Harold's throne, not as the oppressor of Hereward the Saxon and the stern, uncompromising lord of the English, but as the hero of the Normans, a figure more commanding even than the pioneer Rolf, and one whose best praise lies in those memories of "le Conquérant" that still haunt the Normandy of to-day.

After William's death the history of Caen is practically the history of every town in Northern France. He had provided it with a commerce of its own, so that it might be strengthened from within, and he had fortified it against assault from without; it fell into English hands, like its neighbour cities, both under Edward III. and Henry V.; it was ravaged by the terrible "Black Death" in the fourteenth century, and harassed by the League wars and stirred up by the revolt of the "Nu-pieds" under Louis XIII.

Finally, we find the Girondist party flying from

the " Convention " at Paris and setting up an insurrection in the provinces, making Caen their headquarters; and one more page from the awful book of the Revolution shows us Charlotte Corday setting out from Caen, grim, ungirlish, filled only with her dreadful purpose, down the long, white road to Paris—which to her meant Marat.

Chapter Seven

SAINT-LÔ AND COUTANCES

IN very early days there was in Northern Gaul a little city on a hill-top, with a river running below, and this city was called Briovira, after the name of the river Vire. But in Christian times a certain bishop of Coutances, a native of Briovira, extended his pastoral protection to his birthplace, and called it by his own name, Laudus, or Lô, by which it is known to this day, although the bishopstool has no longer a place there. Saint-Lô does not strike one, either at first sight or afterwards, as being a cathedral city. The first view, from the railway, is a very rural one, and from an artist's point of view the place is more or less ideal, possessing as it does two important qualifications of a "paintable" town—it has a river, and it stands on a hill. Only the outskirts of Saint-Lô lie about the waterside; the real town is higher up on the steep frowning cliff, and the Rue Torteron straggles across the bridge and up the hill, and

finally, by means of a steep little alley, leads out into the Place Ferrier, where stands the Cathedral. Here, too, the Saturday market is held, and then the hill-top, usually quiet and deserted, blossoms into life, and the Rue Torteron is all a-clatter with farmers' carts and the scurry of *sabots*. The western half of the market-place is known as the " Place des Beaux-Regards," and from it, as its name testifies, stretches a wide view of the river, fields, and wooded hills beyond; here, also, is the fountain, crowned by Leduc's graceful bronze peasant-girl, with water-vessel poised easily over her shoulder.

Saint-Lô was a Huguenot stronghold during the wars of the League, and the cliff-face still retains a fragment of the old defences, the Tour Beauregard, an ivy-covered ruin clinging to the rock, which probably served as a watch-tower in times when the meadows of the Vire were not so peaceful as they are to-day.

The year 1575 saw the siege which the little town counts among the great events of its history, when Colombières, the Huguenot, held out so bravely against the Catholic army. Colombières had marched into Saint-Lô some months before in order to place a garrison there in case of assault, and the townspeople welcomed him almost as a protecting angel. In the next year the enemy's forces marched

up to the Vire under Matignon, and demanded the surrender of the garrison. Colombières sent back a defiant message in answer, and the enemy's guns were soon thundering about the rocks above the river. Saint-Lô happens to be guarded by water on three sides—on two by tributary streams, on the third by the Vire itself, and this western side is further strengthened by the steep precipice, falling sheer down to what is now the Basse Ville. Matignon determined to take a bold line and attack the Tour Beauregard as well as the Tour de la Rose, which stood in a more approachable part. All day the artillery played upon the cliff-face, and all day Colombières cheered on his men to the defence, when a breach at the Tour Beauregard had considerably detracted from their strongest position. At last the gallant leader, springing upon the ramparts, braved the enemy's fire, and fell dead before their eyes rather than suffer the indignity of surrender. When his inspiring presence was gone from their midst the Huguenots seemed to lose heart; their defence wavered, their fire became less fierce, and at the end the Catholics stormed the rock and poured into the market-place.

It is interesting to note that during the siege, as at an earlier one at Beauvais, the women of the town signalised themselves by the good service they

ST. LÔ

rendered, though it was certainly service of a blood-thirsty order, since it consisted in pouring down the terrible streams of boiling pitch and lead upon the heads of the besiegers; a mode of defence, however, very often resorted to by those who did not use firearms.

Traces of Huguenot days can still be seen in the west front of the Cathedral, which has evidently been defaced by some fanatical hand. The irregularity of its porches gives to this façade a curious one-sided appearance, that on the north having a round arch and the central and southern arches being pointed. The two towers are of different periods. In the seventeenth century, when the Cathedral was rebuilt, the perforated stone spires were added, the architect finding his inspiration in those at Bayeux and Caen. The best view of these is from the Ville Basse, where they come remarkably well into the picture, standing high above the grey roofs.

Here the Cathedral-church is, as usual, the centre of all that there is of antiquity in the town. There is one especially beautiful timber house, known as the Maison Dieu, some little distance from the west front; north and south of the church are various narrow streets—the Rue de la Porte Dollée runs over the stream of the same name, and under

a curious old gateway tower; the Rue Henri Amiard leads to the precincts of the Cathedral, the south flank and its outward trend being well seen from here; but there is nothing very tangible in the way of antiquity, and one has an impression that when the bishop departed from Saint-Lô he must have taken with him the soul of the place.

Notre Dame de Saint-Lô has a very unusual and original plan, widening towards the east and adding another aisle to the north and south ambulatories. On the north side is its chief curiosity, an outdoor pulpit, built at the end of the fifteenth century and probably used by Huguenot preachers, to whom a sermon was a sermon, whether preached under a vaulted roof or the open sky. What strikes one most about the interior of the church is its want of light. The nave is absolutely unlighted, having neither triforium nor clerestory, and the aisles have only one tier of large windows, whose glass is old and very fine, though in most cases pieced together; the nave piers are massive, with a cluster of three shafts; those of the choir are quite simple, and have one noticeable feature, the absence of capitals, the vault mouldings dying away into the pier.

Like Saint-Lô, Coutances is a city built on a hill, and has therefore a peculiar charm all its own. The

THE CATHEDRAL FRONT ST. LÔ

steep hill rises very impressively from the rolling country below, showing the Cathedral on the height, the towers of St. Pierre and the grey houses and apple orchards on the lower slope. As a town it has more to say for itself than Saint-Lô; small though it is, in respect of the part it has played in the history of its surroundings it can hold its own with many larger towns. Coutances on its granite rock is the watch-tower of the flat marshy Côtentin. It looks out to sea on the one side and over its subject towns on the other; it has seen the sun flash on the winged helmets of the Danes, on the spears of Englishmen of Agincourt, on the grim figures of the Huguenot leaders in the days of the League, as each in their day marched over the plains to Coutances for the sake of plunder, conquest and religion. Even in Roman times it was of importance; the Gauls called it Cosedia of the Unelli, but towards the end of the third century Constantius Chlorus fortified the town and called it after his name, which it bears at the present day—Constantius—Constance—Coutances.

The son and successor of this Constantius was Constantine the Great, from whose reign dates the spread of Christianity over Western Europe; and the Côtentin, as an old saying goes, now found itself divided between Saint Martin and Sainte Maria.

Churches were built all over the land; bishops—every one a saint in these early days—followed the light of St. Augustine in England, and journeyed about the country making conversions and working miracles.

In the fifth century Coutances received its first great church, the basilica of St. Eureptiolus, built, according to local tradition, upon the foundations of a pagan temple. Later on, Norman invaders did their best to undo the good work of the Christian bishops, and we hear that the bishops of Coutances in particular were compelled to take refuge in Rouen for a century and a half, until the peninsula finally passed into the hands of William Longsword in 931, and for a time the churches had peace.

The barons of the Côtentin played a considerable part in the Norman Conquest of England, being among William's most loyal supporters. Taillefer, the famous warrior at the battle of Senlac, the seigneurs of Pommeraye, Blainville, Pierrepont, all kept up the honour of Coutances in the lands across the water, as well as Bishop de Montbray, who, like Odo of Bayeux, held the office of a bishop in his own country and of a feudal lord in England. History has it on record that he held no less than two hundred and eighty fiefs in the conquered country, besides the lands which belonged to his ecclesiastical jurisdic-

tion in the Côtentin. After the death of the Conqueror various pretenders to the dukedom of Normandy arose, and Coutances suffered from the local wars, falling into the hands of Fulk of Anjou and being retaken by Henry I., and to complete the harassed state of the Côtentin a dreadful famine spread over the district and reduced the town to a state of the utmost misery. In 1203 it was joined to France with the rest of Normandy; but this practically meant an entire renunciation of its freedom. Philip Augustus and Louis IX. confiscated its seigneurial rights and set a French governor to rule over the country instead of the Norman lords, though the latter king probably made up, in the eyes of the people of Coutances, for these encroachments by paying a visit to their town, which honour is remembered by them to-day not only as an act of royal condescension but of saintly beneficence.

In the wars of Edward III. and Henry V. Coutances had its share. Standing in the western corner of Normandy, the town came at the end of a long line of strongholds which one after the other had surrendered to the English assault. Valognes fell, then the Ponts d'Ouve, then Carentan and Saint-Lô. Next Edward turned off towards Caen and followed on to Crécy; so that it seemed at first as though Coutances would escape altogether. How-

ever, the treachery of one of the neighbouring lords was to attempt what the enemy had left undone. In 1358 there lived in the château of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte a certain Geoffrey d'Harcourt, surnamed Le Boiteux, whose nephew had been treacherously murdered at Rouen. D'Harcourt resolved to revenge the crime upon the city of Coutances. He got together an army with the help of the King of Navarre, and drew up his troops outside the town, with heavy machines for battery; and he had succeeded in forcing a breach, when the royal army, arriving at an opportune moment, upset his schemes and sent him back to his château of Saint-Sauveur. In the latter part of the war, however, this good fortune left the city. After his victory at Agincourt the English king marched westward to subdue the towns in the far corner of Normandy, and Coutances fell into his hands in 1418, remaining under the same rule until the Constable de Richemont drove out the English in 1449; and it is said that to all those of the inhabitants who had remained faithful to his cause Charles VII. made reparation for all the spoliation they had suffered at the hands of the English. This may, of course, have emanated from that prince's indolent good nature, which did not object to granting a favour where it was not too much trouble; but considering the utter laziness of Charles

CONTANCES

it seems unlikely that he should have troubled himself to this extent in the cause of a little city in the west, far away from Paris, when he was occupied with the new experience of being king in fact as well as name.

The League Wars were the next to touch Coutances. Bricqueville-Colombières, who, as we saw, was to meet a soldier's death upon the walls of Saint Lô some years later, took possession of the town in the name of the Protestants in 1561, and as the standards of both armies were followed by crowds of half-savage, ignorant peasants, thirsty for plunder of any sort, Coutances found itself overrun as it had been by a tribe of wild beasts. Men, women and children were massacred without quarter, churches and houses were rifled and, worse than all, the beautiful Cathedral of de Montbray suffered a like fate and was despoiled of sculpture, carving, statues and sainted relics, the bishop and clergy being struck down before they could attempt to quell these barbarian inroads. This scene was repeated two years later, when Colombières burnt part of the town, and again in 1566. After such treatment, it is hardly to be wondered at that the inhabitants of Coutances declared for the League, in spite of the fact that this disobedience caused the temporary removal of both their civil and seign-

eurial rights, the one passing to Saint-Lô and the other to Granville.

In the reign of Louis XIII. Richelieu imposed upon the inhabitants of Normandy the hateful tax known as the Gabelle, and by this means stirred up the revolt of the "Nu-pieds." Coutances shared in several of the subsequent disorders. One Poupinel, charged with a commission from the Parliament of Rouen, was murdered in the streets of Avranches; and the tax-gatherer at Coutances, fearing a like fate, armed all his followers in the event of a possible disturbance. The worthy man's extra precaution, however, proved to do more harm than good; his servants in their excess of zeal saw an enemy in every harmless farmer come to do his marketing in the town, and a deadly weapon in every ashen stick, and the pitch of excitement grew so high that when the bell of Saint Pierre began to ring for a christening, they took it for the warning peal of the tocsin, and rushed out into the streets with loud cries, brandishing their weapons and assaulting in their excitement every innocent burgher whom they met.

As was but natural, this unprovoked attack roused the dormant spirit of revolt among the people; Nicolle, the unfortunate tax-gatherer, found out his mistake too late; the "Nu-pieds,"

under their chief, Le Sauvage, burnt down his house and murdered his brother; and for a few days, until the popular fury had quieted down, Coutances was thrown into a state of revolution. The terrible disturbances of the next century, however, did not work much havoc here. Only twenty-three persons in all were sent to the guillotine from Coutances during the Terror, and most of these, we are told, were burghers and not aristocrats, and the victims of private vengeance rather than of public fury.

Coutances had a good many notable bishops. There was Eureptiolus, mentioned above; there were Laudus, the founder of Saint-Lô; and Robert of Lisieux, who built his church on the foundations of the old basilica; and Geoffroy de Montbray, whose best life-work was given to finishing what Robert had begun; Hugues de Morville, who restored the Cathedral in the thirteenth century; and energetic, tenacious Geoffroy Herbert, who was possessed with a perfect mania for building, in and out of Coutances, and to whom the town owes the church of St. Pierre.

The Cathedral at Coutances was founded by the widow of Richard the Fearless in 1030, and completed towards the end of the century by Geoffroy de Montbray, William the Conqueror's

fighting bishop. After the union of Normandy to France it was rebuilt, and the work of restoration extended into the fifteenth century. Entering by the north porch one is struck by the beauty of the doorway, whose overhanging mouldings and shafts are designed with great elegance and freedom. The English type of capital, with round abacus and vigorous foliation, reminds one of the cathedrals of Salisbury and Lincoln; and the tympanum with its sadly-mutilated figures is carried on a corbel table of great beauty. The interior elevation of the bays is composed of three features—pier arches, a fine triforium with quatrefoil balustrade, and a rather small clerestory with a passage-way crossing its base. There is a great deal of exquisite glass in the cathedral, especially in the transepts. In the choir the love of high clerestories, admitting as much light as possible to the chancel, to the almost complete extinction of the triforium, shows itself here as in many other churches already noticed. The upper windows are in two planes, with a light shaft supporting the interior arches.

In the ambulatory there is what looks like a blind stone bay, corbelled out and resting on the capitals of the columns. Probably this is a staircase leading to the upper passages of the triforium and clerestory. The lantern, which is octagon in plan, has three

THE SOUTH PORCH OF THE CATHEDRAL, CONTANCES

tiers of arches, the over-hanging sides being supported by a simple pendentive with very slight mouldings.

Beyond the Place du Parvis, where the Cathedral stands, is the Musée, once the house of Quesnel Morinière, who at his death left to the town both house and garden. The latter is now converted into a Jardin Public, which every French town, however small, seems to possess; and sitting or walking amidst its shady alleys and green lawns, with catalpas and orange trees in full bloom overhead, one feels very kindly disposed towards the good citizen who planted them and left this possession for the enjoyment of his fellows.

During our stay at Coutances one incident took place which may be interesting as showing how mediæval customs still survive in these little towns. In the middle of the night we were roused from sleep by the blast of a bugle in the street below. This was presently followed by a roll of drums and shouts of "Au feu! au feu!" The deep-toned bell of St. Nicolas then took up the alarm and echoed out far and wide its warning notes. In a moment the town was awake. Heads peered out at every window, and the street was soon alive with the tread of hurrying feet; café and cabaret furnished their contingent to the excited crowd, and even children were brought

out of their beds to gaze down the blazing street. The gregarious and sympathetic Frenchman can never allow any event to take place, be it funeral, festival or fire, without calling all his friends to assist at it; and the general turn-out into the streets reminds one of the thousands of Londoners who left their beds to celebrate the relief of Mafeking.

Chapter Eight

LE MANS

"EACH land and city," says Freeman, "has its special characteristics which distinguish it from others. One is famous for its church and its bishops, another for its commonwealth, another for its princes. Le Mans has the special privilege of being alike famous for all three." At Le Mans, church, counts and commune have each made a separate mark upon the roll of French history. The communal power gave the town strength within itself; the counts of Maine, whose line dates back to the time of Hugh Capet, made of it a mighty feudal possession; and the great church above the Sarthe, whose traditions have been handed down even from Saint Martin of Tours, stood apart on its hill-crest and watched over the city.

As was usually the case in these powerful cities the commune was the last element to arise at Le Mans; before its appearance we find both

Church and State fully established on the hill. Julian built his church under the rule of Trajan; Defensor, the local ruler, lived in his palace side by side with the great missionary bishop who had converted him to Christianty; and after him came the line of counts who seem to have been always at war either with Normandy on the one side or with Anjou on the other. Considering these two powerful neighbours, it is wonderful what a prestige Maine did succeed in establishing, by the help of her bishops, and also by the help of the strong fortress which was her capital city. But in the reign of the prince from Liguria, Azo, to whom Maine had descended in an indirect line, a third factor thrust itself into the growing fabric of the city. It may have been the example of Italian states which the coming of an Italian ruler had brought before the Cenomannians more forcibly; it may have been the encroachments of the Countess Gersendis, regent in the absence of her husband; but from whatever cause, it was certain that memories of the municipal rights of ancient Gaul were being kindled amongst the people—murmurs were heard of a time when, under the Roman yoke, a prince did not signify a tyrant—and presently the Cenomannian burghers took the law into their own hands and met together to declare their freedom and—a testimony of their

ST. PIERRE, CONTANCES

strength—compelled Goeffrey of Mayenne and all the surrounding princes to swear their civic oath. Thus was founded the earliest *commune* in Gaul, and when, soon afterwards, the Conqueror subdued Le Mans and the whole state of Maine, the city still retained its newly won privileges, William binding himself over to respect and observe the customs pertaining to the same, the ancient "justices" of the city. A threefold history of this kind leads one naturally to look for a threefold interest within the town itself; yet this is lacking in the city of to-day—its past glories lie rather in tradition and association than in anything more tangible. The church still stands upon the hill, but it stands alone. Almost every trace of feudal prince and ancient commune has been swept away, and the old Le Mans has become a city of solid white-painted buildings and clean, sunny *places*. By the river-side and near the Cathedral a few old houses and crooked alleys still remain, and here too may be seen fragments of the old city walls, built by Roman forethought in the third and fourth centuries. These ramparts have stood the town in good stead. From its position and importance, Le Mans has always been coveted by the enemy, and since the days of Clovis down to the war with Prussia it has known the tread of besieging hosts at its gates. The Normans had it under the

Conqueror, and lost it under his son, Duke Robert; during the Hundred Years' War it was besieged five times; the Huguenots took it during the wars of the League; after the fall of the Bourbon monarchy it was seized in desperation by the Royalists of La Vendée, but retaken by Marceau; and nearer our own day comes the terrible "week of battles" in January, 1871, during which the Prussians occupied Le Mans and defeated the army of the Loire so severely as to destroy all hope of relieving Paris.

"In the second half of the campaign, in the contest against France . . . both belligerents kept the same goal before their eyes—Paris: the one in order to dictate peace from within the walls of the conquered capital, the other in order to gain that victory which would give to the war the long and eagerly-desired change of fortune." During the winter of 1870 the army of the Loire had set out to reach Paris from Orléans; but a succession of defeats drove it back to the Loire, from whence it was to retreat upon Le Mans. Pursuit did not follow at once. The Prussian Army, under Prince Frederick Charles, waited between Orléans and Vendôme until the New Year, when an advance was ordered, and the three divisions of the army marched upon Le Mans by their respective roads. Passing Vendôme, which was the scene of a sharp engagement with the

enemy, they crossed the country between the Loire and the Sarthe with some difficulty; bad weather had made the roads almost impassable, and the district was cut up into vineyards, farmsteads and small valleys. "The invader rarely gets a general view of the country even from elevated positions; he must renounce any plan of acting with large displayed masses, especially in the case of artillery; the action of cavalry is restricted to the roads, and the whole burden of the contest falls exclusively on the infantry." Fighting their way through the scattered French forces two divisions managed to come within ten miles of Le Mans by January 9, and on the next day the battle began. The Prussian watchword was "Forward with all speed," and such speed did they make that at the end of three days they had advanced upon the French in their strong position, keeping always to the maxim, "Stand firm in the centre and act on the offensive at the two wings."

"On January 11, the French army of the West was completely defeated near Le Mans by the German Second Army, under Prince Frederick Charles and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, and Le Mans was immediately occupied." Such was the announcement in *The Times* newspaper on the morning of January 13, 1871.

General Chanzy, who was in command of the

French army of the West, courted defeat by advancing upon Paris, and by his retreat upon Le Mans invited the Germans to occupy it. Prince Frederick Charles, leaving Orléans and passing Beaugency and Vendôme, arrived at the latter place in time to see Chanzy repulsed, but not in time to cut off the French army, which was now in full retreat towards Paris. A series of rear-guard engagements followed as the Prussians drove the French before them towards Le Mans. The storming of Changé was the last of the many battles around Le Mans. It lies in a hollow with hills curving round it on two sides, the north and west, and on these hills the French had taken up their position. They had, apparently, no desire to advance and clear away the Germans who were attacking them, laboriously marching through snow and the thick woods which covered the position. The attacking force ran from tree to tree and sought whatever shelter was available, making frequent charges whenever an occasion offered itself. Notwithstanding their pertinacity they failed to carry the heights, and were for some time in danger of suffering a severe repulse, as the reserves on whom they relied had not yet come up, but were pounding their way along the frozen roads from La Chartre to Le Mans. The troops bivouacked in the snow on

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the night of the 11th, and when the frosty sun rose on the morning of the 12th the French outposts had been withdrawn and retired upon Le Mans. By this time the Tenth Corps had joined the attacking force, and after heavy fighting in the streets and squares the town was won in the evening, and on the following day Prince Frederick Charles established there his headquarters.

General Chanzy in his defence of Le Mans accomplished all that courage and gallantry in his dire situation could suggest; he disputed the country inch by inch before the advancing armies of the Duke of Mecklenburg and Von der Taun, but he was unable with his raw levies, with recruits undrilled, unshod and unofficered, to withstand the furious onslaught of the enemy. Such is the short tribute paid to the French general by *The Times* correspondent with the Prussian Army.

The Cathedral of Saint-Julien sits astride a great rock overlooking the Place des Jacobins—a square wide enough for once to allow of an adequate view of the great church on its eastern side. It stands so high that the want of a central tower is felt less than would be the case at a lower level. The only tower of any pretensions is over the south transept—originally the north transept possessed one also—but even this is rather inefficient. It is advisable to

enter the Cathedral by the west door rather than by the south porch, so as to prevent the uninteresting west wall of the nave from becoming a factor of one's first impression. From this point it is the choir that first arrests our attention; we pass on through the lower, simpler nave and through the great soaring chancel arch that to look upon makes us giddy, to the blaze of deep-coloured glass and the magnificent *chevet* of stilted arches placed close together and looking from their great height much narrower than they really are. The same idea of height and light prevails in the transepts, for by this time the French architect had begun to gauge the emotional effect of tremendous height, and to dare greater things than his predecessors had ever dreamed; while the same insatiable desire for light that we saw in the choir at Amiens has possessed the builder of Saint Julien, and led him to make his transepts nearly all window—especially the northern one, which has a triforium lighted by beautiful fifteenth-century glass—and to put a double ambulatory round the choir, both lighted by that marvellous jewelled glass.

The Romanesque nave was restored in the twelfth century, but this restoration was apparently a replacement of a great deal of old work, with only slight modifications of the original inspiration. A

large door, decorated with sculpture and bearing a strong analogy to the Portail Royal of Chartres, was opened in the middle of the south aisle. Further changes were made in the early part of the thirteenth century, when the ancient apses were destroyed, and the admirable choir, as we now see it, was built—"a masterpiece of effect"—with its encircling chapels radiating like the petals of a flower. The vaulting approaches in construction the "cupola inspiration"; but here, as at Angers and Poitiers, it is an example of only the last traces which remain to us of the domical design.

Besides the Cathedral there are two churches worthy of note—Notre Dame de la Coûture, in the eastern quarter of the town, amongst the shops and markets; and Notre Dame (sometimes called St. Julien) du Pré, across the river in the far west. The latter church, in spite of having been a good deal restored, is extremely interesting. In the nave hangs a little printed history, which tells us that the church was founded by the first bishop of Le Mans, Saint Julian, sent as a missionary by Saint Peter. In honour of his great master Julian built a basilica, which was enlarged by Saint Innocent in the sixth century and restored about 1050. In the fifteenth century both church and monastery suffered from fire; two centuries later the pious Benedictines made

some alterations, but during the Revolution the church was sacked and burnt, and the crypt, together with the tombs of Saint Julian and Saint Hadouin, entirely destroyed. The task of restoration was left to the faithful in the nineteenth century. In spite of the modern work, however, the church contains a great deal that is very interesting and undoubtedly ancient. The nave pillars especially, with their carved capitals, are worth individual notice. In those of the north aisle, from west to east, we find portrayed:

No. 1. Animals caught in a thicket, turning their heads over their shoulders to free themselves from the branches. Notice here how the volute at the corner has suggested to the sculptor a human face.

No. 2. Leaves and curiously twisted arabesques.

No. 3. The same in a simpler form.

No. 4. Volutes and grotesque heads at the angles.

No. 5. [South aisle, east to west] gives a kind of rope-work, with volutes and human-headed dragons.

No. 6. Is much the same as No. 3.

No. 7. Flat *applique* leaves, volutes and ball-flowers; and in

No. 8. We return to the wild animals. Both aisles are arcaded on their outer walls; on the north we find arches ornamented with ball-flowers, on the south an arcade of some interest, as showing the

NÔTRE DAME DE LA COÛTURE, LE MANS

immense variety of design in its capitals—dragons, fir-cones, arabesques, and, strangest of all, winged lions, with a most Assyrian air. Apart from the capitals, the architecture of the church is quite simple, and whoever rehandled it has done so much in keeping with the old work. The windows are round-headed: the clerestory consists of single lights, and the triforium is a blind arcade.

Notre Dame de la Coûture—the name originally referred to the *Cultura Dei*—is an old Benedictine foundation, dating from the sixth century, but destroyed during the Revolution; the church, however, remains, with most of the old work intact, the two square fourteenth-century towers rising in quaint contrast to the modern buildings around them. Between the towers a remarkable Last Judgment confronts the visitor from the west doorway. The central figure, Justice, weighs a sinner in the balance, and apparently finds him wanting, if one may judge by the angle of the scales and the expectantly gleeful attitude of a devil amongst the "goats" on the left hand. Of the interior, the choir is the oldest part, and here we find eleventh-century work, especially in the crypt, which contains the tomb of the founder, Saint Bertrand, and shows the rudely carved capitals and square-edged arches of an age before architects had blossomed out into

beauty of sculpture and design. The same simplicity characterises the choir, which has four bays and a *chevet* of five-round arches, with massive piers, and the abacus square and voluted at the angles. The vaulting of the *chevet* is terminated by figures of saints, which rest upon the shafts of the clerestory windows. There is no triforium, its position being taken throughout the church by corbel tables in the form of human and animal faces. The nave consists of a single wide body without aisles, and set in the blank wall are three large bays of relieving arches, their space being filled in with curious old tapestry, in which appears a medley of Biblical subjects, pastoral and hunting scenes, and Chinese pagodas.

This quiet little church was in the very centre of the furious street fighting which followed the first rush into the city of the Prussian troops, and fulfilled its sacred mission of giving shelter to the wounded and comfort to the dying who lay stretched in the neighbouring streets of the town. "We entered," says the war correspondent of *The Times,* "the picturesque old church of Notre Dame de la Coûture, interesting from its quaint mixed architecture, its old choir and vaulted walls, and were told by the meek-looking priest who sadly showed us over it, and was busy cleaning it as we entered, that no fewer than six hundred wounded had passed the night in it."

Chapter Nine

ANGERS

IF Le Mans marks the first stage from Normandy upon the southward road, Angiers may certainly be counted as another stepping-stone to the lands of the Loire —another landmark in our own history—another city upon a hill, and yet differing from all the hill cities before it. We are now in what Freeman calls "before all things the land and the city of counts," the city which gave to history the name of Fulk the Black, warrior and pilgrim and enemy of Odo of Chartres; of Geoffrey the Hammer, who strove with the Conqueror at Domfront and Alençon; of René the minstrel and of Margaret his daughter, who carried to England the spirit of the old Angevin line, and fought with the strength of two for the inheritance of her husband, meek, scholarly Henry of Windsor, for whom the shield of faith had more significance than the shield of the warrior.

The house of Anjou cannot but have an interest to

an Englishman, since it is the parent stock of our longest dynasty. Long before it came through Normandy into contact with England it held its own, however, in Gaul, Roman and Frankish. The Andecavi, who settled on the Maine, were an important tribe, and their city was of equal importance. In 464 the Saxons wandered down from Normandy and overran Anjou, but their occupation was merely temporary, and left no traces in city or people, as did the Saxon colonies at Bayeux and in England; and when this one cloud has cleared off, an open field is left for the history of the counts. Now the Counts of Anjou may be said to stand very near the head of the list of all the rulers in France at this early time —a long list, which numbers many important names, Hughs and Roberts of Paris, Williams and Richards of Normandy, Thibauts of Champagne—yet against whose feats of arms and feats of policy the Angevins can measure theirs almost one by one. "The restless spirit of the race showed itself sometimes for good and sometimes for evil, but there was no Count of Anjou who could be called a fool, a coward, or a *fainéant*."

The first count, Ingelgar, received his dominion from Charles the Bald, in about 870. After him comes Fulk the Red, who enlarged his father's borders beyond the river; Fulk the Good, the scholar

who defended his learning with the well-known proverb, "An unlettered king is but a crownéd ass," a saying which spread beyond his own realm and found favour at the court of England; and the warlike Geoffrey of the Grey Tunic, who repelled the Breton and Aquitanian incursions and fought in Frankish and German wars besides. Geoffrey it was who gave to the line the famous Fulk the Black, the first count who appears to any great extent in French history—the history, that is, of France proper, at that time apart from the great duchies on her boundaries. His wars with Odo filled a great part of his reign, and brought him down as far as the Loire, where, through the alliance of a count of Périgueux, Tours became his for a short time; also Saumur, after the victory of Pontlevois. On two occasions he turned pilgrim; and he is also found at Rome, applying to the Pope for consecration of his new monastery near Loches, which Hugh of Tours, whose see Fulk had robbed, refused to consecrate unless the stolen lands were restored. Naturally the Gallican Church resented this destruction of their privileges; the full wrath of the episcopate was pronounced against the recreant count, and a legend adds that in further punishment a wind came from heaven and blew down his newly-built church. How this uncanonical behaviour must have vexed the shades of Fulk the

pious! Fulk Nerra was followed by Geoffrey, self-christened the Hammer. He rebelled against his father during his lifetime, but after his death continued the war with Chartres, and actually got possession of Tours, the one city for which every Angevin strove. Count Thibaut was formally deprived of the city by royal command, and it was handed over to Geoffrey, under the favour, the superstitious chroniclers make haste to add, of Saint Martin. Notwithstanding this royal grant, Henry, the Frank king, seems to have been perpetually at war with Geoffrey, and even to have called in feudal service of the Norman duke to aid him against the Angevin count. William himself was no friend to Anjou. The mastery over Maine was a bone of contention to the two great powers on its north and south borders; and when Geoffrey obtained the guardianship of little Count Hugh, and came into immediate contact with Normandy, a definite struggle arose. Geoffrey aimed at the two outposts of William's territory, Alençon and Domfront. Alençon, through the treachery of its lord, surrendered to him; Domfront was also disaffected, and for a moment it seemed as though the land of the great Norman were to be invaded by his southern neighbour. But William was prepared for any emergency. He marched straight to Domfront, where Geoffrey had already

stationed his troops, and laid siege to it. He remained before the town for some time before news came of the advance of Geoffrey himself; and when the Count at last arrived, he sent word of his readiness to give battle. But when the morning broke upon the Norman host, drawn up before the fortress all expectant of a battle with the Angevins, lo! no enemy was to be seen. Geoffrey, whose surname of Hammer by no means maligned his prudence, had thought better of the scheme in the night, and retired with all his men. The Norman writers, of course, set this down to cowardice. But one would like to hear the other side of the story. "Here, and throughout the war, the lions stand in need of a painter, or rather their painters suddenly refuse to do their duty. We have no Angevin account of the siege of Domfront to set against our evidently highly coloured Norman picture."

"The French yearning to make everything new" has done its work in Angers, but though Fulk, Geoffrey, René, and the rest would be at a loss to recognise their old capital in the trim modern town, enough remains to show us what has been. No city standing as Angers does on rising ground above a wide river, with a mass of castle bastions sloping up the hill, could fail to have made history in its day. The modern town may be disposed of in a few words

—it is clean and full of life, and altogether very far removed from the "black Angers" known to our ancestors. This mediæval and grim-sounding title, reminiscent of dungeons and tyrant princes, probably either meant that the ancient town was closely and squalidly built, or else referred to the dark slate with which the country abounds, and which might well have been used for building purposes all over the town, as we still see it in some houses by the river.

The attractive side of Angers is that facing the water, and the river is quite worthy of the town on its banks, though Mr. Henry James does censure the "perversity in a town lying near a great river, and yet not upon it." It is true that Angers has not got as far as the Loire; but it has what is next best, a tributary of the great river—a wide placid flow, which makes no mean show here, spanned as it is by three fine bridges. Looking upstream from the lowest bridge one sees the old and the new together; the clean well-to-do water-front, pleasant boulevards, and a bright little quay with every house the pattern of its neighbour; and above this the black mass of the castle, whose solid hugeness makes the crowning towers of Saint Maurice look as if they were cut out of paper, so delicately and sharply defined are they against the sky. Down river there is a long and sunny path, broad green meadows and a stretch of

country beyond, and little fishing boats dotted about on the water.

But what Angers has of the best is its castle, though it be "the work of intruding Kings," Philip Augustus and Louis IX., and not of the Angevin counts. It is, indeed, more massive than picturesque —"it has no beauty, no grace, no detail, nothing that charms or detains you; it is simply very old and very big—so big and so old that this simple impression is enough, and it takes its place in your recollections as a perfect specimen of a superannuated stronghold." The huge grim bastions, girded with iron bands as though to give added strength to their already giant-like solidity, and the deep moat, filled in old days by the waters of the Maine, stood there for a very real and terrible use, and even now are a splendid example of how men in the Middle Ages defended themselves against all comers. The very steepness and plainness of the vast walls prevented an enemy from gaining any foothold, even supposing him to have crossed the moat in safety. But this great house of defence now gives on to a modern boulevard; a kitchen-garden occupies the moat, and sends the scent of thyme and rosemary up through those loop-hole windows, whose most peaceful prospect of old was the black, silent water below, and whose usual occupants were armed men with cross-bows, or boil-

ing lead, or something equally quieting to the unwary spirit attempting to scale those unscalable ramparts.

In the heart of the town is a very comfortable little inn at the sign of the "Cheval Blanc." The house has a quiet and rather old-fashioned atmosphere, perhaps a relic of past days, as the inn itself has stood there since the sixteenth century, though the present building is quite modern. Another relic —though the term hardly suits such a hale and hearty person—is a delightful old waiter, who has been at the Cheval Blanc for forty years, and wears on his coat with the greatest pride a minute piece of *tricolor* —the recognition of thirty years' service. Close to the Cheval Blanc is the Préfecture, and this contains a hidden treasure in the shape of an old cloister, which runs along one side of the court. This cloister was not discovered until 1836, but the remains themselves date from the twelfth century, and are of extraordinary interest, not merely from their antiquity, but also from the immense variety of subject sculpture which adorns them. There are several bays of round-headed arches, and from their capitals and mouldings dragons and toads, snakes and winged lions, glare and wriggle at the visitor in a grotesque medley. In some cases Scriptural subjects are represented—there is notably the murder of the Innocents,

ANGERS

a marvellously preserved and realistic fresco, reminiscent both in treatment and colour scheme of some of the Bayeux tapestry; the killing of Goliath by David, and the presentation of his head to Saul; and inside a very modern council-room, a wonderful allegory representing the defeat of Vice by Virtue. The Lamb, enhaloed, is in the centre; beneath are two lions tearing apart a wild boar; and in the jambs are virtues, armed with shield and sword, trampling upon demon vices—men struggling with wild beasts —and adoring angels swinging censers. This is partly coloured, and the sculpture is very fine, great attention being given to detail.

Freeman declares the city of Angers to be the headquarters of the Angevin style of architecture, and quotes as a noticeable example of that style the Cathedral of St. Maurice, which differs at least as widely from that of the French churches as from that of Normandy. The object of the Angevin architect was breadth, and he has sacrificed both length and height to the attainment of his end. The view from the west doorway of St. Maurice shows a well-known example of what is termed the " hall plan "—a single wide nave, having choir and transepts, but without ambulatories or aisles. That the church originally had aisles, however, is evident from a plan of Saint Maurice given in Mr. Lethaby's " Mediæval Art ";

they were removed, it is assumed, in order to simplify the construction of the vault. The great relieving arches of the nave as it now stands are divided into three bays only. " In everything," Freeman says, " the tendency is to have a few large members rather than many small ones. There is a certain boldness and simplicity about this kind of treatment; but there is also a certain bareness, and an Angevin church looks both lower and shorter than it really is." The vaulting of the roof here follows the same sub-domical design as that of Notre Dame de la Coûture at Le Mans. The stained glass is perhaps the best feature of the church as far as actual beauty goes; some of it dates from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and both in nave and choir it is very fine, particularly in the windows of the apse and in the rose window of the north transept. The tapestry which hangs in the nave and transepts represents scenes from the Apocalypse, and is very fine Arras work of the fourteenth century.

Chapter Ten

TOURS AND BLOIS

SO much has been said and written of the Loire country during the past fifty years that the modern writer has very little ground left to him, unless it be to avoid calling it the " Garden of France." Yet over-written as it may be, Touraine has not lost any of the charm and romance which must always attach to a wide sunny land, watered by a great river, and " peopled " —one might almost say—by châteaux, every one of which has set its mark upon French history. Certainly there is something very delightful, because so unlike anything else in France, in the endless vista of grey-green levels—here and there a group of slim shivering poplars or a flash of sunlight upon the wide waters of the Loire, which winds in and out of the flats like a great lazy shining serpent—flying sometimes into a sudden rage and flooding the land, or subsiding sulkily amongst high banks and stretches of dry sand.

It is these moods and tempers of the great river that prevent any navigation upon its waters; other smaller rivers—the Seine, for instance, and our own Thames—are alive with craft of every kind; but here, on the great boundary stream between north and south, which seems made for a waterway to the sea, no busy steamers ply up and down with the tide—no barges and market boats disturb the calm of its wide reaches. There never was, for its size, such an erratic and useless river; yet we can afford to forgive it, for the sake of the land which it waters and the cities on its banks.

The impression one carries away from Tours is one of wideness, and brightness, and sunshine—shaded by one or two ancient corners. It is above all things a town really lived in and appreciated by its inhabitants, many of whom are English. Tours is, or used to be, a famous educational centre, and for the sake of education, or economy, or both, whole families have migrated there, besides the unmistakably English students who have been grafted on to a family to learn French. And the river-side shows, if not a strenuously busy, at least a very sociable side of the town life, especially in the summer evenings, when the Tourangeaux, native and adopted, leave the white houses and busy streets, and use their river bank for a pleasant walk.

It is curious how in France each step towards the south seems to be a step further in French history. First there is Normandy, the land of the early Northern warriors, with the fierce blood untamed in their veins; then Maine and Anjou, recalling the days of our own Plantagenet kings, and the close connection of France with England; while Touraine brings back to us the craft of Louis XI. and the magnificence of François Ier. Tours itself, however, has never been content to lie fallow for long; ever since some Roman emperor transported it from the right bank of the Loire to the left, and made it the capital of Lugdunensis Tertia, the town has had an important part assigned to it, and has played out that part to the full. Though in old days Tours was only half of the place, the *cité,* the *bourg,* built round the tomb and shrine of Saint Martin and first called by his name, was of equal if not greater importance, from the many pilgrimages to the resting-place of the great saint. This is easily understood when one considers in what veneration Saint Martin was held by the Gauls and their descendants. Saint Gatianus, the first bishop of Tours, began the good work in the third century, but to Martin is due the subsequent spread of Christianity, not only in Touraine but all over France, so that he really shares with Saint Denis the honour of patron saint. Born of pagan parents in Pannonia,

Martin became a catechumen at ten years old, and five years later was forced, much against his will, to enter the army. After his final conversion and baptism, however, he left it to become the eager disciple and co-worker of Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers; and in 371 he was consecrated Bishop of Tours. The legend of Martin's conversion is well known (at any rate it may be found commemorated in the painted windows of churches all over France)—how the young soldier stationed outside the gate of Amiens shared his cloak with a passing beggar, and how the following night Christ appeared to him in a vision, making known to the angels of Heaven this thing done to Himself as to one of "the least of these."

After Martin's death at Candes his relics were brought to Tours, and in the fifth century Saint Perpetuus built a splendid basilica round the shrine. This church became the nucleus of the *bourg* of Martinopolis, known to the Middle Ages as Châteauneuf. Side by side with the church a monastery sprang up, and in the reign of Charlemagne the famous scholar Alcuin became abbot and founded there his school of theology. Late in the tenth century the basilica was destroyed by fire; two centuries later saw the completion of its successor, but this again, after suffering many evils from Huguenot and Revolutionist hands, disappeared under the First Empire to make

TOUR DE L'HORLAGE, TOURS

a passage-way for the Rue des Halles. Two towers—the church originally had five—now look mournfully at one another across the busy, narrow street: the Tour de l'Horloge, square and solid, with a leaded roof capped by a small eighteenth-century dome, and the taller Tour Charlemagne, so called for the rather insufficient reason that Charlemagne buried his third wife, Luitgarde, beneath its base. These are the sole relics of the ancient *culte* of Saint Martin; though to his memory in latter days a new basilica has reared itself on the other side of the street.

Until the days of the League, the kings of France always found an attraction in the sunny Touraine meadows, and occupied themselves a good deal with Tours itself. On the outskirts of the town is the village of Plessis-les-Tours, where stood the famous fortress of Louis XI., who lived, plotted and died within its walls; here also Louis XII. was proclaimed "father of his people," and here Henri III. and the King of Navarre met together for a common defence against the League. To an Englishman the name naturally associates itself with Quentin Durward, and calls up a picture of the grim fortress so vividly described by Walter Scott, with its triple moat and high palisades, its dark walls and turreted gateways, defended by three hundred Scottish arches, and the donjon tower "which rose like a

black Ethiopian giant, high into the air." The castle of Plessis was in old days a terror to the countryside; the surrounding forest was a perfect network of man-traps, and the intruder, were he fortunate enough to avoid these, had no chance of escape from the arrows of the Scottish guard in their iron "swallows' nests" upon the walls. Hardly less mysterious, indeed, is the central figure within these grim surroundings—Louis himself, whose character, with its strange mingling of guile and religious fervour, unfathomable craft and childish superstition, baffled the men of his own day as it has baffled posterity. He was feared by those who served him, and he was obeyed, because a terrible alternative awaited the disobedient; but he was neither loved nor understood. Of love, indeed, he had little need, and it was not his pleasure that men should understand him.

Very little, however, remains to-day of the "verger du roi Louis" to show that it was once the home of kings. It has gone the way of most of the "illusions . . . in the good city of Tours with regard to Louis XI.," and only a few fragments and "inconsequent lumps" share with some modern buildings the site of this royal prison of Plessis-les-Tours.

The western façade of Tours Cathedral, with its two small towers, is a noticeable example of the waning Gothic style. The detail is so "charmingly

ST. GATIEU, TOURS

executed as almost to induce the belief, in spite of the fanciful extravagance which it displays, that the architects were approaching to something new and beautiful when the mania for classic detail overtook them." Looking eastward from the west door one notices the northerly trend of the Cathedral's axis, commencing from the transept arches. The choir spreads outward at its first bay, the side walls not following the alignment of the body of the church. The glass is both abundant and magnificent in the nave lights, and the enormous clerestory windows display it to the greatest possible advantage. Unfortunately, the fine rose window in the north transept is marred by the cutting across of a vertical pillar, inserted as a support to the crest of the arch. In both transepts the triforium arches present a curious and novel arrangement, the reason for which is not very apparent. The arches are in a double plane, but the openings are not directly one behind another.

The pier arches of the nave are plain, with simple panel-like spandrils, the piers themselves supporting a very large clerestory and glazed triforium. In the latter the heads of the arches are filled in with rich Flamboyant tracery, either in imitation of the fleur-de-lys, or with varieties of wheel tracery in double plane. The choir is much

earlier than the nave, and its bays show a beautiful proportion and harmony in its members, the whole elevation being supported on clustered columns with stalk capitals and square abacus. In the apse the tracery is a slight variant from that of the choir; the arch-heads are here filled in with trefoil instead of quatrefoil tracery. On the north side of the Cathedral are the remains of some cloisters, joined to the main body by two flying buttresses.

To most travellers in France the town of Blois is associated with a château rather than with a cathedral; it is one of a group of towns known and visited for the historic piles which tower above their grey roofs—Amboise and Chambord, Langeais and Chenonceaux, Chaumont and Montrichard. We count Blois with these rather than with the towns famous for their churches, and the bishopstool comes rather as a surprise, or as a thing unconsidered. The Cathedral, built in the seventeenth century and dedicated to St. Louis, occupies a magnificent position, overhanging the grey waterfront of the Loire in a fashion which seems to call for some nobler building. However, although built according to a curiously mixed design in bastard Gothic and Renaissance, there is a certain sense of proportion in the interior of the church, the vaulting being especially simple and broad in

effect. The nave consists of nine bays, with a low clerestory, terminating in stone panels, which occupy the place usually assigned to the triforium, and are left in the rough with a view to subsequent enrichment by sculpture. The examples of adornment at the east end, however, make one feel that the church has been mercifully spared any further fantasies from the chisel of the Renaissance sculptor.

Far better is the Church of St. Nicolas, whose twin towers stand out dark and sharp midway between the water-front and the overhanging mass of the Château. It belongs to the tenth and eleventh centuries, and has not been much restored except by whitewash, which covers most of the interior, but allows a good deal of old work to be seen, especially in the north aisle, where, near the pulpit, we find round-headed windows very deeply splayed. The nave has five bays, and a blind triforium, consisting of an arcade of four small arches in each bay, the last two eastward having only three arches set in the blind wall. These last bays are much ruder than the others, especially on the south side. The clerestory has twin lights, with a rose in the head of the arch, as is seen in the Cathedral at Chartres. The transepts are good, and the little corbel-tables running the

whole way round, form a series of those grotesque and curiously unecclesiastical faces of men and beasts which we find so often in early church sculpture. In this particular series a gridiron plays a prominent part, which is curious, as the church appears to have no connection with Saint Lawrence. Behind the choir is an old chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph, which has a Romanesque apse; and it is noticeable that in this part of the church the roof groining is simple—that is, without ribs. In the lantern, which is in the form of a cupola, each pendentive is terminated by the figure of a saint in its niche.

High above Saint Nicolas a steep flight of steps leads up to the great Château which has made history for the town below. The most striking view is from the other side, where the magnificent "aile François I^er^" rises in imposing fashion above the high road; but the entrance is in the Louis XII. wing to the east, and here the beautiful inner court opens out a varied display of richness. The eastern wing itself contains the private apartments of Louis XII. and his wife, Anne de Bretagne—these are now converted into a local museum and picture gallery—and the lower storey is in the form of an arcade, with unrestored capitals of the fifteenth century. Facing this is the wing of "ruled lines and blank spaces,"

BLOIS

constructed by Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII., upon the foundations of a wing erected by his ancestor, the poet-duke Charles, whom Henry V. took prisoner at Agincourt, and whose son became Louis XII. The old castle of the Counts of Blois had been sold to the Orléans family by the last of the line in 1397, and the new possessors, each in his day, occupied themselves in restoring and embellishing it. So zealous indeed, in this respect, was Duke Gaston, that, had not fate intervened, not only the west wing but the entire building would have been pulled down to make way for his plans. Happily for posterity, this devastation never took place, and the François I^er^ wing, the chief treasure of the Château, is still preserved to us much as it was at the end of the sixteenth century, at which time Blois may be said to have reached the zenith of its fame in the history of France. The Château was then a royal residence, and the roll of its inhabitants forms a long list of illustrious names, foremost among which stand those of Catherine dé Medici and Charles IX., Henri III., and the King of Navarre, and the famous Henri de Guise, who met his death here through the suspicion and jealousy of the king, his cousin. In the Guise tragedy the chief interest of the Château appears to centre. Dark hints concerning "le Balafré" are thrown out during the progress

through a succession of dim, empty rooms—council room and bed-chamber, oratory and private closet, some flooded with sunshine, others dark with the strange misty curtain that age will sometimes hang across an old chamber, and through whose thin veil one seems to see the shades of those old-time kings and queens, walking, plotting and praying as they did when the Château was alive with the tread of men. All this appears to lead up to the scene of the Guise murder, and as the guide reaches the royal bed-chamber and points through a doorway here and down a passage there, one seems to have reached the heart of the tragedy. There, in the long council-room, the Balafré stood, warming his hands by the fire, when the message came that the king awaited him in a cabinet at the far end of the wing; here, in an ante-room close by, Henri III. lifted the curtain and watched the enemy to his death; there in the dark, narrow passage—too narrow even to allow of his drawing sword—Guise found himself caught like a rat in a trap; here, in the king's own chamber, he doubled back for safety, and met his death at the foot of the royal bed. It is all very thrilling and very real; and little as there is to love in Henri de Guise, one cannot but pity the man for the manner of his death; and there seems nothing but justice in the murder of the king himself a short time after-

wards. This second tragedy took place outside the old dungeon, a gloomy round tower with cross-barred windows and a heavy iron door, behind which the Cardinal de Guise, brother of the Balafré, suffered imprisonment at the hands of his jealous cousin. In the centre of the dungeon floor is a trap door, which, considering the general atmosphere of the place, one naturally associates with an oubliette, but which more probably represented the head of a well, run up through the building in order that the inhabitants of the castle should not suffer from want of water in siege time.

It is curious to note that the historical description to which the visitor listens to-day as he follows his guide through those empty chambers at Blois is almost exactly the same as that given a hundred and twenty years ago. Arthur Young, travelling in France in 1787, paid a visit to Blois, and gives the following account of the Château and its history: "We viewed the castle for the historical monument it affords that has rendered it so famous. They show the room where the council assembled, and the chimney in it before which the Duke of Guise was standing when the king's page came to demand his presence in the royal closet; the door he was entering when stabbed; the tapestry he was in the act of turning aside; the tower where his brother the cardinal

suffered, with a hole in the floor into the dungeon of Louis XI., of which the guide tells many horrible stories, in the same tone, from having told them so often, in which the fellow in Westminster Abbey gives his monotonous history of the tombs."

Chapter Eleven

CHARTRES

"CHARTRES," says Mr. Henry James, "gives us an impression of extreme antiquity, but it is an antiquity that has gone down in the world." It may be this very decadence that has kept Chartres within itself and prevented it from growing out into a large pretentious city. Many other places which rival it in age and association have either swept away all traces of their antiquity, or else preserved it in dignified contrast to the modern mushroom town. Chartres has done neither. It is scarcely more at the present day than a quaint country town with a very old-fashioned air, a place of steep, twisting streets and quiet little market-squares, the cathedral rising like a giant from the very midst of the houses. Round the town runs a boulevard, known as the Tour-de-Ville, and interesting for the fact that it follows the line of the mediæval defences—ramparts that kept many enemies at bay when Chartres was a

power in the kingdom of France. Here and there parts of these defences are still standing, and one fragment in particular forms the foundations of an old convent. Another remnant of the old fighting days is the Porte Guillaume, one of the city gates, built when the march of the English forced every French town to keep itself under bolt and bar. Two round towers, embattled and machicolated, flank a low archway, and to complete the mediæval effect, the ancient fosse still remains before the gate, not grass-grown or choked with rubbish, but filled with a clear stream, just as it might have been in old days.

Autricum of the Carnutes held an important position in Gaul, ranking very near the great capital of the Senones. In pre-Christian times it was a famous Druidic centre; but with the advance of Christianity, Savinian and Potentian, the patron saints of Sens, extended their mission to Chartres, converted the inhabitants, and built their first church, according to tradition, upon a Druid grotto. Later on, the town passed into the possession of a line of counts, who were a very powerful factor in mediæval France. The first Theobald or Thibaut is said to have purchased his domain from the sea-king Hasting, who had penetrated beyond the coast and colonised the lands around the river Eure. His son and successor,

CHARTRES FROM THE NORTH

Thibaut le Tricheur, lived in a state of constant war with Normandy, and seems to have been regarded as a kind of evil influence by the old Norman chroniclers, whose hero in Thibaut's day was naturally their own Richard the Fearless. Another of the line was the famous Odo, whose ambition went beyond his own states of Chartres and Blois, and aimed at kingship in Burgundy and even in Italy. Through the greater part of his reign he carried on also the struggle with Normandy which had raged so fiercely in Thibaut's time, besides the standing war with the Angevin line, represented by Fulk the Black. It was, as Freeman says, the fact of this common enemy in the house of Chartres which first brought Anjou and Normandy into direct contact and perhaps laid the foundations of Anjou's subsequent connection with England. Chartres, like Nevers, was made a duchy under François I^er^; later it passed into the Orléans family, whose nominal appanage it has remained ever since, the eldest son bearing to this day the title of "Duc de Chartres." It is also interesting to notice that Henri de Navarre broke the long succession of coronations at Rheims by being crowned King of France in Chartres Cathedral, three years after the town had opened its gates to his army in 1591. Some three hundred years later another enemy appeared outside

the walls, and once again Chartres found itself in the hands of a foreign power. Mr. Cecil Headlam, in his very interesting "Story of Chartres," gives a description of the Prussian occupation, part of which may be quoted here as showing the foresight of the Mayor, who in this terrible time, when the whole French nation seemed utterly demoralised, thought rather of the safeguard of the city and its one great monument, than of the doubtful and dearly-won glory of a protracted defence.

"It was on Friday, September 30, 1870, that the Prussian soldiers appeared for the first time near Chartres. Three weeks later Châteaudun fell, after a desperate and heroic defence, for which that picturesque and ancient town paid the dear price of failure. Two days later the enemy marched in force upon Chartres. The *tirailleurs* and *mobiles* and troops of the National Guard, who endeavoured to defend the town, after vain marching and countermarching, with the same generous ardour and utter ineffectiveness as had distinguished the movements of the other armies before the disasters of Wissembourg, Wörth and Sedan, returned exhausted. Without firing a shot they had been rendered incapable of fighting. Fighting in any case would have been useless. It was wisely decided to capitulate, and on the 21st the Mayor and Prefect of the

Department drove out to Morancez to save the city and Cathedral, by surrendering them to General von Wittich, from the inevitable destruction of which Châteaudun had given them a terrible example. What they saw on their way of the French defence and the Prussian advance convinced civilians and military men alike that it was impossible to hope to defend Chartres."

At the head of the Rue St. Jean, where it leads into the Place du Châtelet, one obtains the first and best view of the two beautiful spires at the west end of the Cathedral. The southern tower, dating back to the twelfth century and conceived in a style which harmonises with the broad and massive design of the whole building, is an example of what was contemplated as a finish to the other towers of the Cathedral. The northern tower, built in 1507 by Jean le Texier, well deserves its reputation as the most beautiful Gothic spire ever designed. "The one, fashioned by the Byzantine chisel, sprang into complete being in the heroic ages of faith in the days of war . . . the other rose, after a long peace, under the hands of the still Christian architects of the Renaissance, when all dangers and difficulties had been surmounted."

On contemplating the plan on which Chartres Cathedral was built one is struck with the enormous space which has been allotted to the choir. Here

the new religious cult finds its earliest expression, greater provisions are made for its ceremonials, larger spaces are given both in choir and transepts for its gorgeous ritual than we find in Paris, Soissons or Lâon. Bishops, priests, deacons, choristers and serving-men needed a wider platform for the ministration of the sacred rites of the Church, and especially to this end was the Cathedral planned out. It is said that its construction was carried out with incredible rapidity in the desire to meet the pressing requirements of the people, who demanded that the Cathedral should be not only the house of prayer for the bishop and his canons, but essentially the mother church of the humblest of her worshippers.

The prevalence of a style, more or less uniform, with its main attributes harmonious and congruous, is the resultant of these forces working together. The completion of the Cathedral was carried out about 1240, and in 1250 were added the two porches at the entrance to the transepts. The sacristy was built in the thirteenth century, and a century later the little chapel of Saint Piat was attached to the eastern apse. The shortness of the nave is attributed to the desire to utilise the foundations of the old crypt for the choir and not to extend the building farther westward than the two

CHARTRES

existing towers. Between these two points, the walls of the crypt and the western towers, the nave had to be constructed and without any possibility of further extension.

No less than nine spires were originally designed and their towers actually commenced. What a magnificent effect would have been produced had they been completed! Standing on the high ground of the city, Chartres with its clustering pinnacles would have been one of the wonders of Christendom. The magnificent glass of the thirteenth century is so deep in tone that upon entering the building one is conscious of a darkness that can almost be felt, so much at variance with the effect of the interior of most large French Cathedrals.

The two porches placed outside the transept doors are the subject of a panegyric from the pen of Viollet-le-Duc. He considers them as the most beautiful and harmonious additions ever made to an existing building, and their architects proved themselves to be artists of the very first rank. No more beautiful specimen of a portal of the thirteenth century can elsewhere be found to exist; glorious and rejoicing in colour and in gold, and of surpassing sculpture and full of impressive and solemn statuary.

Near Chartres there are two small towns which

might well be taken in a day's excursion; both are connected with Chartres historically and both have a certain interest of their own certainly not devoid of attraction to one in search of antiquities. One is Châteaudun, whose fall during the war of 1870 was, as has been quoted above, the signal for the surrender of Chartres; the other is Vendôme, the township of the ancient feudal county. From Chartres it is Châteaudun that lies first in our road. It is a straight, neat little town—most of the streets cut one another at right angles—and the smoke of the Franco-Prussian war still seems to hover about the place; one of its chief memories, indeed, is the great fight in October, 1870, when a bare thousand *franc-tireurs* of the national guard kept the town for half a day against a Prussian army of ten times their strength, and the quiet market-square—now called the Place du 18 Octobre—was transformed into a battle-field. All the heroism that the day called forth, however, could not save the town from being sacked and burnt—the last of a long series of conflagrations, lasting from the sixth to the nineteenth century, that has won for the little town its cheerful, hopeful motto: "Extincta revivisco." Certainly Châteaudun has risen from the flames with a fresh lease of its quiet life, but it has been completely modernised, and except for a few narrow alleys sloping

RUE DE LA PORTE GUILLAUME, CHARTRES

down towards the river, which would seem to have escaped the general devastation, there is little that does not belong to to-day. This is, however, making an exception of the Château overlooking the Loire; a great exception, since at present all that there is to see in Châteaudun consists in this square pile on the brow of the hill; the rest, whatever it may once have been, is only a memory; and even the Château itself hardly seems a part of the town, since it is not until we have left the little white-painted streets behind that we realise its existence, and then it comes as a gigantic surprise; a huge, square, turreted mass, on its platform of rock, looking away over the rolling meadow lands, untroubled through all the years of siege and conflagration. Thibaut le Tricheur, Count of Champagne, built it in the tenth century; it was rebuilt in the twelfth century, and again by its seigneur, the famous "Bastard of Orléans," one of the most devoted followers of Joan the Maid. Finally, under Louis XII., François d'Orléans-Longueville applied himself to fresh renovations, and built the splendid façade overhanging the Loire.

Considering that the Duc de Vendôme has always been a title of some importance in France since the early part of the sixteenth century, and the Comtes de Vendôme a power in the feudal

world before that, one might feel rather surprised not to find the town itself presenting a more imposing aspect. Vendôme is a picturesque place, but it is more of a long straggling village than anything else, and it is only the ivied ruins on the cliff that take one back—with a stretch of imagination, it must be confessed—to the days of feudalism. Vendôme was originally, it is thought, a Gallic township under the name of Vindocinum; it was then fortified by the Romans, evangelised by Saint Bienheuré, and finally became the seat of a feudal count about the end of the tenth century. In 1030 was founded the abbey of La Trinité, whose church is one of the first "monuments" of Vendôme. It dates from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries; the beautiful Transition façade is well worth notice, and so is the belfry tower, separated from the church and tapering up to a tall stone spire. Inside the church there are some fine choir stalls of the fifteenth century, of which the carving of the *miséricordes* is very interesting in its variety and quaintness of design.

The Loire at Vendôme divides into several small streams, and in walking through the town one appears continually to be crossing a succession of bridges and coming upon fresh pictures of clear green water fringed by low-roofed houses and dark *lavoirs* with their curtains of snowy linen. Outside

the town the river winds smoothly away past the cool quiet of the public gardens, to join its tributaries and cut its silver channels through the distant water-meadows.

"The route lay along the plateau until the heights were reached which enclose the valley of the Loir; the road winds down to the river beside hanging woods, red with autumn leaves not yet fallen, and crowned with a ridge of firs. A corner is turned and Vendôme comes in sight, lying beneath the shelter of the old ruined castle on the hill. As the horsemen enter the town the people all come to the doors of their houses and gaze with every sign of interested curiosity. There is an anxious expression in their faces. They do not welcome, though they obey their visitors with alacrity. They bring forth bread and meat and wine, and lay the tables for breakfast, but good cheer they have none to give."—*The Times:* "Prussian Occupation of Vendôme."

Chapter Twelve

ORLÉANS, BOURGES, AND NEVERS

"THE thought that the name of the city itself is most likely to call up is that of the Maid who, born far away from Orléans, has taken its name as a kind of surname . . . We have got into a way of thinking . . . as if Orléans had its chief being as the city of the Maid." Orléans certainly does share with Rouen the chief honours of association with Joan of Arc, the "Victrix Anglorum," as she is described on a memorial tablet in the Cathedral, and the town is equally full of monuments to her memory, though the memory in this case is that of a great triumph, whereas at Rouen it marks the last stage, captivity and death.

Orléans was the key of central and southern France, and if the English once got possession of it they would certain overrun all the land south of the Loire; hence its importance to France as a stronghold. Joan set out from Blois late in April,

1429, in charge of a convoy of provisions for the beleaguered city, and arrived opposite the town, on the left bank of the Loire.

From November to the end of April the English had lain before the town, and, although the inhabitants were not actually starving, provisions were very scanty, and the bringing in of fresh supplies was practically an impossibility, since the usual means of approach, the bridge across the Loire, was blocked by the enemy, who occupied the outstanding fortress of Les Augustins at the bridge, and on the right bank. On the Orléans bank the English had built several strong *bastilles,* guarding the city and effectually preventing any communication by means of the western highways. The weak spot was on the east side, where the besiegers had one stronghold only, the fortress of Saint Loup; and from this point Dunois, the general-in-chief, and La Hire, the leader of Joan's army, intended to effect an entrance; but the Maid herself, with that love of directness which characterises her whole career, desired to attack the English, not at their strongest, but at their weakest point. Both wind and stream were against their ferrying over to Saint Loup; and in the end Joan's simple tenacity and childish belief in the counsel of her "voices" carried the day. The army was sent back to Blois, there to cross to the right bank and

attack Orléans from the west, and meanwhile she herself, the wind having turned, crossed in a boat by night and entered the town with La Hire and Dunois. She was hailed by the people of Orléans as an angel of deliverance, and lodged in the house of the treasurer Boucher, near the Porte Regnart at the north-west angle of the city walls; and from this vantage point Joan watched the enemy's movements, appearing from time to time upon the ramparts and bidding defiance to the English, who, as was perhaps natural, retorted by showering insults upon her. On May 4 she rode out in full state to meet her army which had arrived from Blois. Three days later the great fight began. All this time the English troops had scarcely moved a finger to hinder the French operations, but when the enemy crossed the river by a bridge of boats and made a feint of attacking the fortress on the left bank, retreating apparently in confusion, the English sallied forth after them, thus provoking a real attack upon the bridge fort. During the fray the girl-leader was wounded; never for a moment did she give in, but stood in the fosse grasping the white banner—sword she would not wield—and cheering on her companions; with the result that by nightfall the position was gained, the English were driven out, and Joan returned in triumph into Orléans by the bridge. The greater

ORLÉANS

part of her victory was now accomplished. On the following day the French forces marched outside the walls of the town to meet the English line; but Talbot and his men had not reckoned with what they, in the superstition of their time, believed to be "a force not of this world," and the morning light shone upon their helmets and spears in full retreat towards the north. France was saved, and a clear field was left for Charles the Dauphin—the gates of his kingdom were flung open wide, that he might enter in and possess it.

But the greatness of Orléans belongs to an earlier day, before Joan heard the voices in the Domrémy meadows, probably before Domrémy ever existed. It was Attila the Hun who, indirectly brought the town up the ladder of fame. Aurelianum in the fifth century was a desirable stronghold, and as such, Attila spied it afar from his Asiatic plains, and set out to conquer, and, as one authority has it, to "vainly besiege" it, though Freeman inclines to the opinion that "the business of West Goth and Roman was, in the end, not to keep them (the Huns) out, but to drive them out." However that may be, Attila was eventually forced to give up his project, and Aurelianum emerged from the struggle glorious and triumphant, to become the seat and stronghold of kings, and, until its

union with Paris in 613, the capital of a separate kingdom. Since then it has been the scene of siege, martyrdom and persecution, down to the days of the Franco-Prussian war, when it finished an eventful history by a Prussian occupation in October, 1870, a sequel to the battles of Patay and Bonbay.

Orléans is beautifully placed on a hillside overlooking the Loire. With this physical advantage, and its long list of historical associations, one cannot help feeling that it might have done better for itself, and have become more than just a quiet, unobtrusive and rather dull city, with all its monuments easily attainable. The Cathedral is an example of the last lingering phase of Gothic architecture, and was rebuilt, so we are told—after its destruction by the Huguenots—during the interval between 1600 and 1829. The building as a mass has great merit, for the architects have made an effort to clothe it with dignity, and one feels that the church itself is conceived in a spirit to make it, certainly at a distance, not unworthy of the stronghold of Clovis and his successors.

The train which we took from Orléans to Bourges was slow enough to enable us to look out, almost as easily as from a *voiture,* at the richly wooded country. Here and there a small pyramidal church tower peeps out from the trees, but, as a

THE HOUSE OF JACQUES CŒUR, BOURGES

rule, there is little sign of life in this pleasant country, and even the fields and the gorse-covered commons are bare of sheep and cattle. This *train-d'omnibus,* in discharge of its functions as a mail train, distributed letter-bags at every station. Here were waiting young girls acting as postmistresses, many of whom had come from a considerable distance, having ridden on bicycles, bareheaded, in the scorching sun, along dusty roads, to deliver up their heavy loads and to enjoy a chat with the travelling postman, who was evidently welcomed by them as bringing all the latest bits of gossip along the line.

About a mile away there is a very beautiful view of the town, and the general effect is a grey one. Roofs and houses—the latter perhaps originally built of yellow-white stone—have all weathered to a beautiful grey, and there is an air of mediævalism about the place. Bourges, indeed, like many other towns in France, goes back to early days for its greatness, and belongs far more to the past than to the present. The fifteenth century saw it at the height of its fame as a king's residence; Charles VII., perhaps finding the more northerly towns too hot for him during the English occupation, took up his abode there and became for the time being "King of Bourges"; and Louis XI. founded a university in the town.

Here was born the famous Bourdaloue, and Boucher, the painter of Versailles before "le Déluge," Boucher who was

> "a Grasshopper, and painted—
> Rose-water Raphael—*en couleur de rose,*
> The crowned Caprice, whose sceptre, nowise sainted,
> Swayed the light realms of ballets and bon-mots;
> Ruled the dim boudoir's *demi-jour,* or drove
> Pink-ribboned flocks through some pink-flowered grove,"

and who now, his Grasshopper days ended, lies buried beside his mother in the Church of Saint Bonnet.

Perhaps the principal interest of old Bourges centres in the name of Jacques Cœur, the merchant prince, "a Vanderbilt or a Rothschild of the fifteenth century," who in his days of prosperity built a great house on the hill-side where his native town stands. Cœur, we are told, founded the trade between France and the Levant; later he became Master of the Mint in Paris, and one of the Royal Commissioners to the Languedoc Parliament. He was three times sent on an embassy to foreign powers, notably to Pope Nicholas V. Charles VII., weak, unstable, and always in need of money, relied on him absolutely, but with the usual characteristics of a weak master, was one of the first to desert and despoil

BOURGES

him of his wealth when occasion offered. The beginning of the end came through a disgraceful and apparently quite unfounded accusation against Cœur at the time of the death of the famous Agnes Sorel, whom he was accused of poisoning. Jacques was too prosperous not to have enemies, and these were, as usual, prompt to use every opportunity against him. The first steps taken, calumnies of all kind poured in to defame the man whom France had once delighted to honour, and the rest of his career is a strange mixture of exile, mysterious captivity, and equally mysterious escape, honourable reception in Rome, and friendship with the Pope; the last scene of all, perhaps the strangest and most foreign to all idea of a peaceful, prosperous merchant—for here we see him in command, not of a fleet of trading ships laden with merchandise, but of vessels of war sent against the Turks by Pope Calixtus III. Rumour has it that, far from dying in poverty and sorrow, Jacques Cœur, at the end of his life, had acquired greater riches than when at the zenith of his fame in France, but the fact remains that he died in exile, with a cloud over his memory which was not cleared away until many years after, when popular favour again smiled on his name, and he became, what he remains to this day, the citizen-hero of Bourges.

There is a very charming description—too long to

quote here—in Mr. Henry James' "Little Tour in France" of the house of Jacques Cœur; and one point of interest attaching to it is that it is built upon the old defences of the town, and at the back are many considerable remains of solid Roman bastions.

It is one of the most beautiful types of a fifteenth-century town-house that can possibly be imagined—a veritable remnant of the ancient prosperity of Bourges, of a time when such houses were no uncommon feature in the streets—when men who had made their fame and fortune loved to build for themselves a beautiful home in their native town, and enrich it with every conceivable ornament. Modern *nouveaux riches* indeed do the same, though perhaps not in their native place, where their memory as butcher or baker might, in their eyes, tell against them; but the difference between their "mansions" and the hotel of Jacques Cœur is the difference between an age when the Renaissance was in its early freshness and an age when it has suffered the degradations of many modern horrors in the style that is popularly designated "handsome." No one looking upon the delicate sculptures, the wonderful wood carving, the courtyard with its cloister, the lovely porticos and galleries, can doubt the taste of the man who built and lived in this "maison pleine de mystères."

THE MUSÉE CUJAS, BOURGES

The Cathedral of Bourges, which, as Freeman points out, is essentially French, although at the head of the Aquitanian churches, is well seen in approaching the town, where it rises above a base of grey tiles and warm white walls—a long flank of choir and nave, unbroken by transepts. The thrust of the heavy vaulting is stopped by a perfect forest of flying buttresses, between whose walls are built chapels, either for chantries or family monuments. From inside the town it is not much in evidence until one ascends the Rue Royale, where one comes upon it quite unexpectedly at the end of what Mr. Henry James calls a "short vague lane," somewhat in the same manner as one comes upon St. Paul's bursting into view at the top of Cheapside.

The absence of transepts accounts naturally for the want of any central tower or lantern, and as there are no heavy transept pillars supporting the arches at the crossing, to intercept the view, the elevation of the Host is visible to every worshipper, and the eye travels in one sweep through nave and choir to the beautifully jewelled windows of rich old glass, ranging from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. The east terminal vaulting springs so low as to mask part of the side-lights of the apse. This is also very noticeable in the east end of Sens Cathedral, the beauty of whose windows is marred by the vaults

cutting across the heads of the lights. At Bourges, however, the spandril or cheek of the vault is pierced by a foliated light, showing a certain amount of the window behind, and thus taking away the appearance of depression in the low springing vaulting of the apse.

It is easily recognised that in point of historical importance Nevers, in comparison with some of its neighbours, dwindles almost into insignificance, and to the traveller coming from Orléans and Bourges, fresh from the scene of the triumphs of Joan of Domrémy, and from the seats of French kings when France was at the height of her power, there may be a slight sense of disappointment at not finding the same historical "lions" at Nevers. History, though not passing over the town entirely, has only touched it with a gentle hand, and Nevers, though possessed of plenty of material for making itself a name, has never really risen very far above being the capital of the Nivernais. It existed in Roman days under the Celtic name of Noviodunum; Cæsar made use of it as a military depôt in his Gallic campaign, and thought the town was of sufficient importance to be a storehouse for the imperial treasure; its countship dates from the tenth century, and it became the seat of a bishop, although later than many of the Auvergne cities. Yet the counts of Nevers never made

THE HÔTEL-DE-VILLE, NEVERS

a stir in the world, as did Odo and Thibaut of Chartres, or the Fulks and Geoffreys of Angers, and nowhere on its ecclesiastical roll do we find a name like Hilary of Poitiers or Martin of Tours. Despite these early deficiencies, however, Nevers has much to interest the casual visitor, and there are four principal attractions—the Cathedral of St. Cyr, the Romanesque church of St. Etienne, the ducal palace (now the Palais de Justice), and the Porte du Croux.

The early church of St. Etienne, begun in 1063, is a fine example of a Romanesque building. It is also a very severe example, with a nave of round-headed pier arches, double-arcaded triforium and small clerestory lights. The bays of the nave are modified in the choir by the pier arches being stilted, by a small triple-lighted triforium, and by more importance being given to the clerestory windows. There are, also, monolithic columns and hollow-necked capitals, which are unusual in France. The church is covered by a barrel vault, the crossing of the transepts being crowned by a dome. Mr. Spiers, in his book on "Architecture East and West," says: "The French builders of the South of France have always had the credit of being the originators of the barrel vault, with its stone or tile roof, absolutely incombustible, lying direct on the vault; to them also,

I contend now, we owe the development of the dome, with its pendentives set out in a manner peculiar to themselves, and in no way corresponding to those found in the East."

The Cathedral of St. Cyr is the only church in France—with the exception of Besançon—which possesses an apse at both the east and west ends. St. Gall in Switzerland, Mittelzall, Laack and many other German churches show this remarkable plan of a western tribune or paradise. In some instances it was used as a tomb-house, with entrance from without by means of a staircase. In the old basilicas, however, the tribune was not unfrequently at the west end, so that the officiating priest could at the same time face the east and also his congregation. The crypt at the west end, with its fine Romanesque capitals, is very interesting, and dates from the early part of the eleventh century, being about contemporary with that of the Cathedral of Auxerre. The original church, with its two transept arches of the same date, was lengthened eastwards in the thirteenth century, and later on had the further addition made of a choir with an apsidal termination; the chancel and nave are not separated by transepts, but the two merge quietly into each other by simple contact.

One afternoon, while contemplating this strange church, our attention was diverted from arch and

PORTE DU CROUX, NEVERS

apse by the rustle of a small bridal procession entering by a side door and being received by a priest who was waiting at an altar in one of the chapels. After some formalities of examining the certificate of civil registry, the ceremony began; and it was very interesting in its brevity and friendliness. In the English church the priest addresses the principals, with a kind of austere familiarity, by their Christian names, be they princes or paupers. But here such a liberty is rendered impossible by the natural social politeness of the French, and the contracting parties are reminded of their marriage obligations under the courteous appellations of Monsieur and Mademoiselle.

The ducal palace is quite close to the Cathedral. "We find," Freeman says, "the two great central objects, State and Church, sitting becomingly side by side." The ducal days of Nevers date only from the end of the sixteenth century, when François I^er^, with his usual love of display, bestowed a peerage upon the Nivernais. Before this its feudal overlords went by the more mediæval title of count, and the palace (built a century before the count became a duke) has reared itself upon the foundation of their ancient stronghold. The fourth attraction of Nevers, the high square gateway tower known as the Porte du Croux, may also be regarded as a relic of feudal

days, seeing that it dates from 1398, and was evidently part of the town's defences. It is a noble specimen of mediæval defence, a tall gateway tower, protected, like the Porte Guillaume at Chartres, by its ancient fosse—long lancet openings running up above a low round archway and two pointed turrets flanking the hatchet-shaped central roof, with the treacherous line of machicolation below. In the middle of the sixteenth century Nevers passed to an Italian master, one of the Gonzagas of Mantua, from whom, a hundred years later, Mazarin bought it back again, and left it at his death to the Mancini family, who held it until the Revolution.

Most French towns nowadays fill their shops with a display of local pottery, good, bad and indifferent; the industry of Nevers, however, is an old-established one, dating from the occupation of these very Gonzagas, who came from a land where the faïence industry, as well as glass-blowing, was fully developed as a fine art, and who founded in their domain a school of artists which should teach their secrets to France. The industry has remained in the town ever since, and some of the modern work is very charming, with its curious trade-sign, the little green arabesque knot or *nœud vert*, which some fanciful spirit designed for the sign of Nevers.

Chapter Thirteen

MOULINS, LIMOGES, AND PÉRIGUEUX

FROM Nevers an expedition to Moulins is quite practicable, and the traveller *en route* to Limoges may think it worth his while to pay a visit to this town, which stands as a monument to the fallen house of Bourbon. In the fourteenth century the dukes of Bourbon made Moulins their residence, and stayed there until the desertion of the Constable to the cause of Charles V., when the city was annexed by the French king, François I^er^, in an access of righteous indignation. The "Tour de l'Horloge," which is the main feature of the town, and looks more like a Dutch belfry than a French design, formed part of the old château belonging to this same Constable; and it may be supposed that not only were his lands confiscated, but his castle destroyed, by way of punishment for his alliance with the English king and the German emperor.

The story of this Constable de Bourbon is an interesting one. He belonged to the Montpensier

branch of the Bourbon family, and in 1505 married Suzanne de Beaujeu, heiress of the reigning line, so that the title of duke and the rich Bourbon estates passed into his possession, and therewith Charles became one of the most brilliant figures in an age of brilliancy and magnificence. His handsome person and military talents had even in early youth gained him a place amongst the foremost gentlemen of France; but his marriage brought him such an access of wealth and influence that even Louis XII. trembled for the safety of his throne, and refused to risk any increase in his popularity by giving him command of the Italian army. In 1515, however, when the Duc d'Angoulême came to the throne as François I^er^, Bourbon was made Constable of France, and for a time seemed to have attained to all that Fortune could give him. He was the close friend of the king, and in an era of lavish display that came with the first François, and did not wholly disappear until it was swept away by the hand of the Revolution, no favours seemed too great, no honours too high, for the brilliant and much-envied favourite. To such a height did Charles de Bourbon reach, that one can, indeed, hardly wonder at his fall, which was bound to come sooner or later, and when it did come was all the greater, all the swifter, from the very might of his power at court. The mischief arose in the first place

through the jealousy of the king's mother—reports and scandals were in the air, and François was not slow to take note of them—and of the growing distrust of his favourite at court. Quarrels arose between King and Constable. Presently the evil reports took definite shape, and grew into the grossest of insults; and as soon as it was seen that Bourbon had lost the King's favour all tongues were loosened against him. Added to these troubles, he was engaged in a lawsuit with the mother of François, the Duchess d'Angoulême, who on the death of his wife Suzanne claimed the heirship to all his estates and fortune. As may be imagined, on the principle of striking a fallen man, the case went against him, and the great duke found himself friendless and penniless, with large sums owing to him from the State, but with little hope of payment. Men in those days were not over-chivalrous, and the idea of clinging still to an ungrateful, ungenerous sovereign who had cast him off like an old glove did not commend itself to a nature like that of Charles de Montpensier. He resolved, since France would have none of him, to try his fortune with Germany, and accordingly joined the cause of Charles V., to whom for a time he gave his best service, and then, finding the imperial promises, too, like the proverbial pie-crust, determined to carve out honours for himself and

find a kingdom in Italy. He marched to Rome with a division under his command, and made a bold attack upon the city walls, but an arrow from the ramparts, shot, so one story goes, by Benvenuto Cellini, the famous sculptor and court musician to the Pope, put an end to his ambition, and the Constable died in harness outside the walls of Rome at the very outset of his gallant attempt to cast off the yoke of kings and make his fortune by his own sword.

Of Bourbon's château there remains only the tower bearing the curious name of the Mal-Coiffée, and a Renaissance pavilion—an appendage found in the castle of every great noble of this time.

In the eleventh century Moulins was one of the more southerly fortresses to hold out against William of Normandy. It had been commanded by a certain Wimund, who surrendered it to Henry, the French king. As an important outpost it was garrisoned strongly and put under the command of Guy of Geoffrey, Count of Gascony, presently to become William VIII. of Aquitaine. The Norman duke, however, was advancing upon Arques, which was within an ace of surrender from hunger, and with little difficulty he obtained terms from the garrison. News of this defeat soon flew to Moulins, and its commander seems to have been instantly seized with an access either of

MOULINS

panic or of prejudice—the two bore a curious relation in those days—and without giving the Normans time so much as to come within sight of the town, he withdrew his garrison and left Moulins with all speed.

The Cathedral at Moulins has a curious misfit of nave and chancel. The former is of the thirteenth century, with a high clerestory and rather low triforium arches; the latter is Flamboyant, with a flat wall termination to the east end, and seems to have been built without any regard to the pre-existing nave; at any rate, the main piers do not meet, and a small bay of no particular style is introduced literally as a stop-gap.

An excellent hotel—the "Central"—makes Limoges a convenient stopping-place on the southern road, irrespective of its attractions to those interested in faïence and enamel work; but there are plenty of other interests within the town, and Limoges may, indeed, speak for itself in this respect, by reason of its standing on a hill, overlooking a river, and containing, in the old quarter at least, ancient houses and crooked streets enough to satisfy any craving for the picturesque. The town slopes up a hill rising from the Vienne, and really divides into two distinct parts, *ville* and *cité;* the *ville* is the newer town straggling up the

slope, while the *cité,* the original camping-ground of the Lemovices, occupies the quarter near the river. So distinct were these two in the Middle Ages that we even read of war between them as between two separate states, the *ville* led by the abbot of Saint Martial, the *cité* by the bishop. The great church of the river quarter is the Cathedral of Saint Etienne, built, so tradition has it, upon the remains of a former church erected by Saint Martial, and dating from 1273-1327, with a few later alterations. The west end terminates in the substructure of an old Romanesque campanile, resting on pillars. "The lowest story," says Freeman, "after a fashion rare but not unique, stood open. Four large columns with their round arches supported a kind of cupola." Under the choir is a crypt, dating from the eleventh century, and thus at each end of the later church is a relic of an older time.

Limoges had formerly been favourable to the English, but since the dukes of Berri and Bourbon had laid siege to the town, and had been aided by Bertrand du Guesclin, the inhabitants, including the bishop and the governor, gave up their somewhat wavering allegiance and turned to France. On hearing of this defection the Prince of Wales flew into a great passion and "swore by the soul of his father, which he had never perjured, that he would

not attend to anything before he had punished Limoges; and that he would make the inhabitants pay dearly for their treachery." The price they had to give was the safety of their city. Edward marched upon Limoges from Cognac with a large force; but the new masters had garrisoned the town so strongly that it was impossible to take it by assault. He therefore resolved upon another and a more terrible way. He undermined the fortifications, and set fire to the mine, so that a great breach was made. Froissart describes the inhabitants of the town as very repentant of their treachery, but adds poignantly that their penitence did little good, now that they were no longer the masters; and certainly it was not rewarded by mercy. The English troops rushed into the breach and poured down the narrow streets, massacring right and left, plundering and burning, sparing neither women nor children; and when the Prince at last turned back to Cognac, he left behind him ruin and desolation where, a few days before, had been strength and prosperity. During this terrible time the Church of Saint Etienne happily escaped from damage, although all the rest of the old town —"old" even in 1370—seems to have been destroyed. An interesting reminder of more modern history remains in the name of one of the streets.

The Cathedral is connected with the Place Jourdan by the "Rue du 71ième Mobiles"; and this street is so named in recognition of the valour shown by this regiment in the field, and in the memory of those killed during the Prussian war. It is an assurance that their heroism and endurance in a hopeless struggle are not forgotten, and that an equal devotion to their country will be shown, should the need arise, by succeeding generations of their fellow-citizens. Monuments are not readily subscribed for, nor are places where they may be erected easily found. A permanent testimony to the gallant services of a regiment might be borne by calling a street after its name. London accorded a great welcome to its volunteers at the termination of the Boer war. Is there any street or place called after the name of the City Imperial Volunteers?

In a cathedral city like Limoges, where the church itself has a good deal of interest and the town is not devoid of attraction, one is not readily inclined to place its industrial interests very high on the list of things to be seen; yet the fact remains that in this particular place the chief industry is closely bound up with the town's history. The Limoges school of enamel workers had attained celebrity as early as the twelfth century, when the *champ-levé,* or engraving process, was in vogue, the ground-work of

LIMOGES

the plates consisting of graven copper and the cavities filled in with enamel. This kind of work may well be seen in Westminster Abbey upon the tomb of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. In the fourteenth century France borrowed from Italy the art of transparent enamelling, which the artists at Limoges developed into enamel-painting, and this branch was carried on at Limoges for upwards of two centuries, until it fell into decay under Louis XIV. and gave place to the modern miniature style.

Under François I^er^ this art of enamel-painting attained to a high degree of perfection. The sixteenth-century taste inclined always towards the brilliant and magnificent, and the same love of display and richness which showed both in dress and in architecture found also expression in the art of enamelling. One of the most famous artists of this school came from Limoges, whence he was known as Léonard Limousin. His work became the pattern of excellence after which all lesser artists strove. "While some of the works were executed in brilliant colours, most of them were in monochrome. The background was generally dark, either black or deep purple, and the design was painted *en grisaille,* relieved, in the case of figure subjects, by delicate carnation. The effect was occasionally heightened by appropriate touches of gold, and in many of the

coloured enamels brilliancy was obtained by the use of silver foil, or paillon, placed beneath a transparent enamel."

At Périgueux we seem to have left Northern France in the far distance and to have taken the first definite step into the Midi. The architectural pilgrim as he wanders southward is conscious of the existence of two distinct styles, possessing features dissimilar in construction and design; in one case he finds barrel-vaulted churches, in another large churches roofed with pointed domes, whose origin it is difficult to determine. Of the latter type the church of Saint Front is a notable instance. It rises above the old quarter, which occupies the centre of the town, the modern portion, quite distinct from the rest, as was the case at Limoges, sloping up the hill, and the remnant of the old Roman city fronting the river. The original Vesunna of the Petrocorii stood on the left bank of the Isle; the Roman Vesunna crossed to the other side, and is now represented by the ruins of an amphitheatre, dating from the third century, and some second-century baths. The old Château Barrière is also built on Roman fortifications, and two of the Roman towers still remain, besides the "Tour de Vésone," which was probably part of a pagan temple.

It is a curious fact that here the ancient remains

PERIGUEUX FROM THE RIVER

of the Roman city should be so much more prominent than is usually the case. At Bourges we saw the house of Jacques Cœur built upon a Roman foundation, and many other places keep, in part at least, their Roman walls; but Périgueux has Roman remains which absorb quite half the interest aroused by the city on the Isle—the other half being devoted to the church. From the site of the Gallic Vesunna, on the left side of the river, the Tour de Vésone is the foremost object, so old that, as Freeman says, it looks almost modern. "It is a singular fact that, while a mediæval building can scarcely ever be taken for anything modern, buildings of earlier date often may. The primeval walls of Alatri might at a little distance be taken for a modern prison, and this huge round, it must be confessed, has to some not undiscerning eyes suggested the thought of a modern gasworks." Then the partly mediæval Château Barrière attracts notice, dating at its latest from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and by its name recalling one of the noblest families of mediæval Périgord.

With the rise of the abbey of Saint Front, a new town arose also, and the old quarter shrank up within itself, remaining still the abode of the nobles and gentlemen and the clergy of Saint Etienne, but yielding the real precedence to the vigorous new *puy*

higher up the hill. "Here, as in some measure at Limoges, the tables are turned. The *ville* stands apart on the hill, with the air of the original *cité,* while the real *cité* abides below, putting on somewhat the look of a suburb." Even Saint Etienne, the old Cathedral-church of La Cité, has, owing to its partially ruined condition, practically renounced its importance both in intrinsic position and in external appearance. The great tower, which once stood at the west end, has gone entirely; the cupolas which crown each bay show the relation to those at Saint Front, and in place of the eleventh-century apse stands a flat wall, terminating in a choir of a century later.

The church of St. Front is "the only domed church in France with the Greek cross for its plan." The original building is said to have been consecrated in 1047 by the Archbishop of Bourges and burnt down in a great fire in 1120. It was not until after this date that the five-domed church and the tower on the west side were constructed. "By this time the Church of Saint Mark at Venice was completed, as far as its main structure was concerned, and already the panelling of the walls with marble and the decoration of its vaults and arches with mosaic had made some progress. It was one of the wonders of Europe, and the idea of copying its

ST. FRONT, PERIGUEUX

plan and general design would appeal at once to a race of builders who for more than a century, as I shall prove later on, had been building domed churches throughout Aquitaine, who were perfectly acquainted with their own methods of building domes and pendentives, and therefore would not be obliged to trust to foreign workmen to execute them."—Mr. R. Phené Spiers.

It would be quite out of our province to follow out Mr. Spiers' arguments in support of this theory, as it would lead us into the entangled byways of a discourse on methods of "bedding" and centring arches and pendentives. Suffice it to say that he clearly points out the difference which exists between French and Byzantine domes, capitals and voussoirs and the prevalence of the Aquitaine style, and on this evidence maintains that French, and not Greek or Venetian architects, built the abbey church of Saint Front. This conclusion is also supported by Viollet-le-Duc, who expresses his opinion that Saint Front was undoubtedly built by a Frenchman who had studied either the actual Church of Saint Mark at Venice or who had had opportunities of seeing the design of the Venetian architects. Its general conception, it is true, was Venetian and quasi-Oriental, but its construction and details do not recall in any way the decorative sculpture or method of building

which obtained at St. Mark's at Venice. As to the ornament, it belongs to the late Romanesque style.

Saint Front must indeed have appeared a strange erection and unique in conception amongst its sister churches, and no doubt exercised a great influence over the builders of churches north of the Garonne in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The infusion of Oriental art into this part of the country is explained by the distinguished French archæologist, M. Félix de Verheilh, as partly due to the presence of Venetian colonies established at Limoges. He says that the commerce of the Levant was carried into France and into England along trade routes existing between Marseilles or Narbonne and La Rochelle or Mantes. The landing of Eastern produce at these ports on the Mediterranean and its carriage overland to the north-western seaboard of France was rendered necessary to protect it from the Spanish and Arab pirates who infested the coasts of Spain and Africa, and also to avoid the risk of storms and heavy seas of the Straits of Gibraltar.

Chapter Fourteen

ANGOULÊME AND POITIERS

ANGOULÊME has at a distance more the appearance of an Italian than of a French town. The heavy red pantiles, the campanile and dome of the Cathedral, the little terraces sloping up the hill, all recall the southern towns; but the river with its fringing poplars finally proclaims the city's nationality. There is nothing of especial interest to be seen in the town itself. Angoulême—Ecolisma of the Gauls—has of course had its history; it suffered pillage by Visigoth and Norman, was annexed by England, re-taken by France, occupied again by the English, and finally made over to its rightful sovereign in 1369.

During the Hundred Years' War Angoulême was in the possession of the English, and under the governorship of Sir John Norwich surrendered to France. The Duke of Normandy lay, we are told, " for a very considerable time " before the town, and the inhabitants waited daily for the Earl of

Derby, who was to relieve them, but who showed no signs of approach. The French made a raid upon the English cattle under the guidance of the seneschal of Beaucaire and captured not merely the beasts, who—strange laxity—were pasturing outside the walls of the town, but several of the English who rushed out to recover their possessions. Finally the governor began to lose hope; Derby was nowhere within reach, the French gave no signs of withdrawal, and worse than all, the townsfolk began to murmur and to declare as far as they dared for the enemy. Norwich and his immediate followers found themselves in some danger; but by a clever stratagem they escaped from surrendering themselves to Normandy. A truce was called, and under cover of this the governor and his friends sallied quietly forth from the gates, passed through the entire French army, without hurt, and took the road to Aiguillon before the enemy had realised what they were about. Meanwhile the disaffected within the town readily gave themselves up to the Duke, and received his mercy.

Here, however, as at Nevers, an up-and-down history has left little mark upon the town, and Freeman's criticism is no more than the truth: "Except we went on purpose for the view, we should hardly go to Angoulême at all." Saint Pierre at Angou-

lême is another example of the domed church that we left at Périgueux; but while the cupolas carry on the same half-Byzantine idea as prevails in Saint Front, the tower at the north transept brings in a train of thought which is distinctly Italian; moreover, at Périgueux all five cupolas are well seen from the outside, whereas here only one appears, to balance, or rather to contrast with, the north tower. Once inside the church, however, the other domes appear, roofing over the nave, which is without aisles, after the manner of the Angevin churches. In its original form the Cathedral of Saint Pierre was begun early in the twelfth century—about 1120—but it has been twice restored, once in 1654 and once, in the middle of the last century, by M. Abadie.

It was planned simply with a nave roofed by four cupolas and a choir with four radiating apsidal chapels. Later on in the century the love of building places of worship larger and more suited to the growing desire for an enriched ceremonial and elaborate ritual resulted in the addition of transepts surmounted by towers, which gave to the Cathedral of Saint Pierre at Angoulême the distinction of being one of the first, if not the first, of domed churches built on the plan of a Latin cross. Of the two towers only one, the northern tower, exists to this day, the

southern transept being roofed by a flat conical dome. Certain further additions were made about the same time, such as the western façade with its sculptured portal. The black lines of the ashlar work, as if ruled with a lead pencil, detract very much from the impressiveness of the interior, as they give undue emphasis to the horizontal joints and arrest the eye in its first natural flight from floor to vault.

Saint Pierre at Poitiers is a church of a very different description. Certain characteristics it has which connect it with the Angevin style, but unlike most of the Angevin churches, it has aisles throughout. From the outside the appearance is that of a single mass, long and low, and very wide, for the aisles are nearly as broad as the nave; as at Bourges, there is no central tower at the crossing; but then at Bourges we have a great French church, a mighty mass rising sheer up from the ground, unbroken by any transept; here at Poitiers there are transepts, but the line of their towers comes below the line of the roof, and the effect given is one of length without height. Height is also wanting in the two unfinished and unequal west towers, and the east end literally falls flat, by reason of its bare terminal wall; the apse, to which one grows so accustomed in a French church, is seen only from the interior. It is oblong in plan, showing, as M. Viollet-le-Duc points

ANGOULÊME

out, no sign either of choir or sanctuary. The transepts are more like side chapels with altars on their eastern walls. There is no sign of northern influence, and the church is in many of its features unique and without imitators. Certain details of construction bring it into line with St. Maurice at Angers; it is an ordinary example of the churches of Poitou, with their three naves of equal height and Byzantine cupolas.

To the south of the Cathedral lies what alone would make Poitiers worth a visit, without the other churches which call for notice—the little Temple Saint-Jean, said to be the oldest baptistery in France, and dating probably from the fourth century. Once inside, we can realise the position of the officiating priest and the place occupied by the rooms where the converts disrobed themselves and whence they were conducted to the central basin, fed by a continual stream of water, where stood the bishop, the typical representative of the first Baptist. Freeman says: "It is the one monument of the earliest Christian times which lived on, so to speak, in its own person, and is not simply represented by a later building on the same site. It is the truest monument of Hilary."

The name of Poitiers churches really is legion, but there are two more which should not be passed over

—first, Notre-Dame-la-Grande, a beautiful Romanesque church standing in the market-place, with a long barrel-vault roof, unbroken by transepts, and terminated by towers ornamented with "fish-scale" pattern; next the church of Sainte Radégonde, the queen-saint of the sixth century, wife to the first Chlothar. She lived among the nuns of her own foundation of the Sainte Croix, and lies buried in the crypt of her church, which contains also a marble statue, erected indeed to her memory, but in the likeness of another queen who had few pretensions to saintliness—Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV.

Fortunatus also became a monk of Poitiers, that he might at least have the satisfaction of living near this queen, whom he worshipped.

The nuns of Sainte Croix went to England and founded there a sisterhood on the Green Croft near Cambridge, and this priory remained until the end of the fifteenth century, when the foundation was suppressed by Bishop Alcock, and became part of the corporation of Jesus College.

It is with a certain feeling of apology toward tradition and childish days that one leaves to the very last the mention of the Black Prince's great fight. Not until we have reached fairly mature years do we realise that Poitiers has a cathedral and a baptistery and many churches; but there are

POITIERS

very few of us who do not associate with the earliest days of history books the name of the "Battle of Poitiers, 1356." More properly it is the Battle of Maupertuis, and Freeman indeed denies its right to "come into the immediate story of the city."

A short account may not be out of place here, however, since the battle, whether in or out of Poitiers, does, nevertheless, stand out as a landmark in the long struggle between English and French. Having stormed and taken the Castle of Pomerantin, Prince Edward marched downwards through Anjou and Touraine; and from the scarcity of fodder on the way he began to conclude that the French king could not be far off. Arrived at a village near Chauvigny, on the Vienne, he engaged in a skirmish with some of the enemy, and learned that John's army had marched forward towards Poitiers; therefore, forbidding any further engagement, he pushed on with all possible speed, and came up with the French some leagues from the town, on the plains of Maupertuis. The French king himself was just about to enter Poitiers, but hearing that the English had come up and were attacking his rear-guard, he turned back into the fields and there encamped his forces. Meanwhile the English entrenched themselves in a well-guarded position between hedges and vineyards, and waited there until the morning, when

John's army rode out into the plain. "Then might be seen all the nobility of France, richly dressed out in brilliant armour, with banners and pennons gallantly displayed; for all the flower of the French nobility were there; no knight or squire, for fear of dishonour, dared remain at home." At the last moment an attempt at mediation was made by the Cardinal de Périgord; but as the French king would listen to no terms save unconditional surrender, which the English prince refused, his labour was in vain; and the following day the armies drew up in line of battle. "When the Prince of Wales saw, from the departure of the Cardinal without being able to obtain any honourable terms, that a battle was inevitable, and that the King of France held both him and his army in great contempt, he thus addressed himself to them: 'Now, my gallant fellows, what though we be a small company as in regard to the puissance of our enemy, let us not be cast down therefore, for victory lieth not in the multitude of people, but where God will send it; if it fortune that the journey be ours, we shall be the most honoured people of all the world; and if we die in our right quarrel, I have the king, my father, and brethren, and also ye have good friends and kinsmen; these shall avenge us. Therefore, for God's sake, I require you to do your devoirs this day, for

if God be pleased and Saint George, this day ye shall see me a good knight.'" Then the battle began in earnest, the English shouting "Saint George for Guienne!" The French answering with "Montjoie Saint Denis!" Froissart gives a very long and detailed account of the fight in all its part, with lists of the nobles and knights who were killed and wounded, and in many cases stories of their several adventures—none of which have place here. It will be enough to say with the old chronicler himself, that, in spite of the odds against the Black Prince, "it often happens that fortune in love and war turns out more favourable and wonderful than could have been hoped for or expected. To say the truth, this battle which was fought near Poitiers, in the Plains of Beauvois and Maupertuis, was very bloody and perilous; many gallant deeds of arms were performed that were never known, and the combatants on each side suffered much." The rest is known to every one, the taking of King John of France, the gallant work of the archers, and the commendation of the Prince by his father, who had watched the fight from afar.

Even without the battle the story of Poitiers is a sufficiently varied one, and connected in a great measure with the story of England, if it be remembered that Eleanor, wife of our Henry II., was also

Countess of Poitou and brought it to England as part of her dowry; and in English hands it remained until Philip Augustus saw fit to confiscate all our French territory in 1204. After the peace of Brétigny Poitou passed to England once more, only to be surrendered to Bertrand du Guesclin in the course of the next ten years. Here at Poitiers Charles VII. was proclaimed King of France; and, in contrast, it is likewise interesting to note that here also was held a court of inquiry upon the misdemeanours of Joan of Arc, by whose aid Charles was not only proclaimed but crowned King. After this the English prestige in France dwindled to nothing, and therefore the joint history stops at this point, and the history of Poitou and Poitiers stands for France alone.

Chapter Fifteen

LA ROCHELLE AND BORDEAUX

LA ROCHELLE calls to mind two things principally: first, the great resistance of the Huguenots in the sixteenth century, and then the siege and the expeditions under Buckingham in the early days of Charles I. These two events are really part of the same struggle for supremacy between Calvinist and Romanist, only divided by a period of quiescence under the rule of Henri de Navarre, who, having professed both faiths in his day, probably knew how to keep the two parties at peace. Before the religious wars La Rochelle was known as a flourishing and peaceful seaport town; but no sooner had Condé and Coligny shown their faces there in 1568 as leaders of the Huguenot faction, than a spirit of warfare, provocative as well as defensive, seemed to pervade the town, and even on the high seas the cruisers of La Rochelle were a terror to the Romanist, since in the cause of the true faith no Huguenot stopped at

piracy and plunder. From this first struggle La Rochelle emerged with flying colours, but in the days of Richelieu and Buckingham it was less successful, and traces of its surrender exist to-day in the mole, cutting off the outer harbour, which Richelieu laid down to prevent the English fleet from gaining further entrance to the port.

The first attack on Buckingham's part was made in the summer of 1627. A war with France, impending only in 1625, but swift to take definite shape, was among the inconvenient legacies bequeathed by James I. to his son. With the utmost difficulty a forced loan was obtained from Parliament in order to meet the war expenses, and the Duke of Buckingham was put in command of the fleet which sailed from Portsmouth in June to the relief of the Huguenots whom Richelieu was besieging in La Rochelle. This task was not an easy one. Before gaining the harbour the fleet must pass the fort of Saint Martin on the island of Ré. This island had been strongly garrisoned by Richelieu, but the English squadron lay between the fort and the mainland, cutting off all possibility of relief; and after being blockaded for nearly two months the French commander signified to Buckingham his willingness to surrender the next morning. The duke was in the highest spirits when the welcome news arrived, and lay down to rest that

ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOR, LA ROCHELLE

night with the joyful certainly of carrying all before him, driving the Cardinal from before the port and entering La Rochelle in triumph. But the morning broke on a very different picture. During the night an easterly gale had sprung up and had blown a fleet of French provision boats over to Ré, through the very midst of the English ships; and once more Saint Martin's prepared for defence. Nothing daunted, Buckingham sent to England for fresh troops, and if the supply had depended upon the king he might still have gained his victory; but the Parliament, now a growing power in England, and a power whose growth was making itself felt, overruled the royal pleasure, and found here the long-wished for opportunity of crushing out the war, of which the country was heartily tired, by refusing to grant further supplies. Probably the fact that Buckingham was no favourite with the people also helped to turn the scale against him. At any rate a French force came up before any word was sent from England, and the duke was obliged to withdraw from La Rochelle with considerable losses. The sequel is well known. In the following year Charles prorogued his troublesome Parliament, and once more the favourite set off for Portsmouth, never to reach France, since the dagger of John Felton put an end to his ambitions and avenged, so said the

English people, his country's wrongs. Thus La Rochelle was left entirely to the tender mercies of Richelieu. The Huguenot power was utterly broken by the year's siege which followed, and La Rochelle found itself despoiled of the prestige which it enjoyed as the stronghold of the Protestant faith.

La Rochelle of to-day is perhaps little known to the casual traveller. Inland France has so many attractions that most travellers never get so far as the sea-coast; great churches and great rivers draw them elsewhere, and if they want sea breezes there is always Trouville or Etretat ready to hand. Nevertheless, La Rochelle is one of the most beautiful of seaports in France; and this is no faint praise, for all towns of this kind are bound to have a peculiar charm of their own—that kind of charm which belongs to a harbour, and the coming and going of ships, and the open sea beyond. To this the town adds certain attractions of its own, among which are the beautiful colours of the boat-sails, and the old grey forts guarding the harbour on either side. These ancient sentinel towers are relics of the prosperity of La Rochelle, and date back to a day before Buckingham sailed up to the port, before the name of Huguenot had ever been heard in France. On the left hand the Tour Saint-Nicolas, built at the end of the fourteenth cen-

THE HARBOUR OF LA ROCHELLE

tury, raises four round crenellated turrets above the harbour; on the other side stands the Tour de la Chaine, a grim, solid-looking round fortress; and farther on still may be seen the stone *flèche* of the Tour de la Lanterne, looking from a distance like the spire of a church. And the mention of churches brings us naturally to the Cathedral, which, built in the middle of the eighteenth century, has so very little to say for itself that one cannot help feeling it to be a poor set-off to the sea-board of the town; though perhaps it might in any case be useless to look for beauty of this kind in a town whose inhabitants ranked the adorning of churches as one of the deadly sins of Rome. This cathedral was, it is true, built long after La Rochelle had ceased to be a Huguenot stronghold; but when we remember that the beauty of any former church would have fallen a victim to the fanatic's hammer, we can forgive the architect, and cease to mourn for what might have been. The Cathedral of La Rochelle is not a thing of beauty, but at any rate it has not displaced anything that might have pleased us better.

From La Rochelle to Bordeaux the road runs by heavy-leafed plantations of every kind of tree, notably acacias, whose great size is particularly apparent to an English eye. Then, as the Bordelais comes nearer, we run down to the smooth, peaceful Cha-

rente, winding quietly through its meadow lands, not unlike the upper reaches of the Thames, and yet very unlike in one respect, since the water is completely deserted, and even in the height of summer few pleasure boats disturb its smooth surface. Boating as an amusement *per se* has very little place in the programme of a French country gentleman, though bathing and fishing are both included in it; and the same thing is noticeable nearer Paris, on the Marne, where a pair-oar gig, if ever it got there, would part its timbers through sheer neglect, and break up in a few months.

Bordeaux itself is worthy of its reputation, and is certainly, strictly speaking, a "handsome" city, with a waterway almost as grand as the Thames at London, spanned by a beautiful bridge of red-brick and stone, built in 1822, which might well serve as a model for some of our London bridges. It is a pleasant place enough when once the fact of its being a large and modern city is accepted; and although it has not the romance of the inland hill-towns nor the picturesque situation of La Rochelle, it has always been a city of note, ever since the Gauls came down to the river and called their settlement Burdigala. For three centuries it belonged to England; the same Countess Eleanor, of whom we heard at Poitiers, brought it to her English husband, Henry II., and

for some reason it does not seem to have been included in the general confiscation of English territory under Philip Augustus, so it remained an English town and shared in English victories and defeats until Charles VII. was crowned, and the English retired by degrees to their own land. Bordeaux was also the birthplace of poor, weak, well-meaning Richard II.; and his father, the victor of Poitiers, held his court in the town for some time. Here he held, too, his conference upon the affairs of Castile.

Don Pedro was at that time engaged in a struggle for the Castilian throne with his brother, who was not the lawful heir. Neither prince seems to have been blameless in his conduct, and Edward declared that he only upheld the claim of Pedro on account of his lawful birth, and not from any individual deserts; but this declaration apparently failed to satisfy the rest of the English and Gascons within Bordeaux, and it was finally decided to summon a council, composed of all the barons in Aquitaine, "when Don Pedro might lay before them his situation, and his means of satisfying them, should the prince undertake to conduct him back to his own country, and to do all in his power to replace him upon his throne." The conference resulted in a decision in favour of Pedro, and by order of the

English king a certain number of knights and men-at-arms were sent from Bordeaux to escort the claimant back to Spain and to help him to regain his own, all expenses being paid by Castile—a frugal method of rendering aid!

The Cathedral is attributed to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and as it now stands consists of a large nave, without aisles, which were swept away for purposes of roof construction, as at Angers and in Notre-Dame-de-la-Coûture at Le Mans. According to Mr. Bond, an early tower was built in 550, which was noticed by Fortunatus. In plan the building shows the influence of the well-known church of the Cordeliers at Toulouse. "Its western portion is a vast nave without aisles, sixty feet wide internally and nearly two hundred feet in length. Its foundations show that, like that at Angoulême, it was originally roofed by three great domes; but being rebuilt in the thirteenth century, it is now covered by an intersecting vault . . . and an immense array of flying buttresses to support its thrust, all which might have been dispensed with had the architects retained the original simple and more beautiful form of roof."

Within easy distance of Bordeaux is Libourne, a little town upon the Dordogne, which, though now overshadowed by the great port of the Garonne, was

in the Middle Ages of almost equal importance in the wine-growing country, and had a special interest as being one of the *villes bastides* found in several places in the south of France, especially in Guyenne. These really owe their origin to England, for they were founded by Edward I. during his French wars as refuges for those unable to take an active part in the struggle.

Mr. Barker, in his "Two Summers in Guyenne," gives a very interesting description of these towns, noticing particularly the straight lines of their streets. "In contrast to the typical mediæval town that grew up slowly around some abbey or at the foot of some strong castle that protected it, and in the building of which, if any method was observed, it was that of making the streets as crooked as possible, to assist the defenders in stopping the inward rush of an enemy, the streets of the *bastide* were all drawn at right angles to each other." The *bastides* were built merely for shelter, not, as was the case with other towns, for defence as well, though in the lawless days of the thirteenth century it was sometimes necessary even here to put up a wall, palisade and moat. Libourne has a remnant of such fortification in a quaint old round Tour de l'Horloge with machicolations and a pointed roof. The term *bastide* was also applied to a single work of defence which,

although isolated, formed part of a continuous system of fortification. A single house outside the walls of a town was also called a *bastide*.

Passing out from Libourne, we reach the very heart of this wine-growing country—a true country of the south it seems in summer, with the endless stretches of vineyards—row after row of green, twisting, climbing wreaths round their stiff, straight poles, under a blazing southern sky, and every now and then a single hill rising suddenly out of the plain, whilst the river slips quietly away in the distance to the sea. On, or rather in, one of these hills the hermit Émilion fixed his cave-dwelling, far back in the legendary years of history; and now—strange contrast!—the town founded by this ascetic, abstemious saint owes its fame to the purple juice of the grape, and sends forth from its slopes not water from his dripping well, but good red wine to gladden the heart of man. A visitor to Saint-Émilion in early summer will find a curious greenness over everything —not only in the freshness of the vineyards. When evening falls the very labourers rise from their task and move home through the dusk like so many green spectres—though from no other cause than from their constant watering of the vines with sulphur-water to kill off the devouring insects.

Irrespective of wine-growers, Saint-Émilion has

BORDEAUX

many things to be seen on its crescent-shaped hill. There is the wonderful church, carved out of the cliff-face, now in ruins, but possessing store enough of massive square piers and round-headed arches to bear witness to its ancient grandeur; and a separate Gothic tower and spire of the twelfth century points a long tapering finger above the narrow creeper-grown streets and low, crowded roofs on the hill-side. The church to which the tower really belongs is not this curious monument carved from the rock, but the collegiate church farther up the hill, now used as a parish church. Other monuments there are besides —the icy-cold, moss-grown vault known as the "Grotte de Saint-Émilion," where superstitious maidens drop pins into the well to find out when they shall be married; the ruined convent of the Cordeliers, with its grass-grown courts and ivy-covered cloister arcades, and the great walnut tree whose branches shade an empty, silent place where once the brothers chanted and the novices worked at their simple tasks; and the cave-dwellings, where seven of the Girondists hid from the wrath of the Terror, sheltered and fed by a kindly couple who paid later for their good nature by the guillotine, after four of the seven refugees had been captured and executed.

The ancient Saint-Émilion—the town to which

most of these buildings carry us back—is in reality an old English fortress, growing from the oppidum of the Gauls to the fortified stronghold which passed to Edward I. and continued, with a few interruptions, to enjoy the privileges of a royal borough of England until the fifteenth century.

Chapter Sixteen

SENS, AUXERRE, AND TROYES

THE Senones, who settled on the banks of the river Yonne and founded the city of Agenticum, which we know to-day as Sens, were one of the most influential people in Gaul—even the Parisii were considered of less account—and did not submit to the Roman yoke until the final defeat of Vercingetorix. The change of dominion, however, in no way detracted from the importance of their capital city, but rather enhanced it, since the conquerors made the town metropolis of the fourth Lugdunensis, and were at some pains to rebuild it in a fashion befitting its position. Six great highways met within its walls; arches, aqueducts and amphitheatres sprang up all over the city, and Agenticum henceforth became a prosperous and powerful stronghold, well able to withstand the incursions of later days, of which there were many, on the part of the Franks and the Saracens and, finally, of the Normans.

Christianity was introduced by the martyr-saints Savinian and Potentian, who, as at Chartres, built the first church in the city, thus laying, so tradition has it, the foundations of the Cathedral which was to come in after times. The town then became an archbishopric, and later, like most towns of any standing, a hereditary countship, the proximity of the two overlords, spiritual and temporal, leading not infrequently to disastrous results, especially when in the twelfth century a communal power sprang up and contributed a third factor to the contest.

In 1234 Louis IX. married Marguerite de Provence in the Cathedral of Saint Etienne, and on his return from the Holy Land, five years later, with the precious relics purchased from the Emperor of Constantinople, the reliquary and its contents were paraded through the streets in a palanquin, borne by the king and his brother, Robert d'Artois, who walked bare-headed and bare-footed at the head of the procession, casting aside all their royal state—which, indeed, poor Louis would have gladly left for ever—to set an example of reverent homage to the people of Sens. Thomas à Becket lived for some months in the Abbey of Sainte-Colombe by the river-side, founded by one of the Chlothars in the seventh century in memory of the young virgin saint who suffered martyrdom under the rule of Aurelian.

Sens, on its quiet, graceful little river, "bending . . . link after link through a never-ending rustle of poplar-trees," is a picturesque place, like most towns which have left their importance behind them in the Middle Ages, and have come down to modern days unmodernised. Standing on the far bank of the Yonne, looking across the river reaches, one gets a very delightful picture of the town, almost like that of some of our English Cathedral cities—the shining river, the green water-meadows, and above them the deeper green of the grand old trees, clustering round the great church, whose high grey tower rises from their midst, watching the town, meadows and river by day and by night, when men wake and when they take their rest, as it has watched ever since William the architect built up its stones and brought their pattern across the water that the church of Britain's first Christian city might share the glories of her sister in France.

Sens is not very well known to travellers, although there is no cathedral in the whole breadth of France which ought to be dearer in the eyes of every Englishman, on account of its being in all probability the parent of the choir of Canterbury. Hither Becket is said to have fled, and to have sought sanctuary at the altar of St. Thomas against the persecu-

tion of Henry II. Viollet-le-Duc describes St. Etienne as a cathedral unique both in plan and style of architecture—a mixture of arches both round and pointed, such as we find in the choir of Canterbury, showing how much it is under the influence of the Burgundy school. This is proved by the great similarity of plan between the other Burgundy cathedrals, and it is surmised that after the eleventh century Autun, Langres, Auxerre and Sens possessed certain dispositions of plan peculiar to themselves, which were adopted in the Eastern portions of Canterbury. There appears to be no precise information as to the early foundation of the Cathedral of Sens, and the architect who designed it is unknown. The west front exhibits a number of fine sculptures relating to the lives of St. Stephen, St. John, and other saints; in the central portion, which dates from the end of the twelfth century, religion has given place to the arts and sciences, which are represented by twelve sculptured figures, now in a mutilated condition—Grammar, Medicine (a figure holding plants), Rhetoric (giving a discourse), Painting (represented drawing on a tablet placed on the knee), Astronomy, Music, Philosophy, &c. Under each figure is sculptured an animal or monster; in one case a lion is devouring a child, an elephant carrying a tower. . . . The " encyclopædic spirit "

SENS

was dominant in the twelfth century, and in the object lesson of these stones an ignorant and unlettered crowd could find its elementary instruction.

Auxerre, which is about twelve miles from the main line between Paris and Dijon, may be considered as an outpost lying on the threshold of the Morvan country. Many of the towns in this district, notably Semur and Avallon, are built on large granite bosses protruding through the oolitic formation. Auxerre possesses churches as fine as those of any other city of its size in France. As one enters the town by the lower of the two bridges which cross the Yonne, the three churches—St. Pierre, St. Etienne and St. Germain—suddenly burst into view. On the left is St. Pierre, with its picturesque tower and forecourt entered through a Renaissance gateway; the Cathedral of St. Etienne with its single tower, high nave, and girdle of flying buttresses, stands on the highest ground in the centre of the group; and further eastwards the abbey church of St. Germain, detached from its spire, spreads out along the beautiful river front of the Yonne.

"Towards the middle of the tenth century the Cathedral of St. Etienne was complete in its main outline; what remained was the building of the great tower, and all that various labour of final decoration which it would take more than one generation to

accomplish. Certain circumstances, however, not wholly explained, led to a somewhat rapid finishing, as it were out of hand, yet with a marvellous fulness at once and grace. Of the result much has perished, or been transferred elsewhere; a portion is still visible in sumptuous relics, in stained glass windows, and, above all, in the reliefs which adorn the west portals, very delicately carved in a fine firm stone from Tounerre, of which time has only browned the surface and which, for early mastery in art, may be compared to the contemporary work in Italy."—WALTER PATER, "Imaginary Portraits."

The interior of the Cathedral offers one very striking piece of architectural planning: the Lady Chapel and *chevet* are joined together by two slender shafts, an arrangement by which the three features, ambulatory, *chevet* and Lady Chapel, are united in one broad design. This conception gives a very beautiful and harmonious effect. The eleventh-century spire of St. Germain, which appears quite detached from the body of the church, is one of the very early stone spires which exist now in France. It springs from a fairly broad base, and has a slight entasis or swelling to avoid the appearance of any midway gathering-in of the outline of the spire. The crypt of the eleventh century is "deep sunk into the ground and very dark," having aisles, and is in plan

ST. GERMAIN, AUXERRE

practically a small edition of the choir of Canterbury, following the true Burgundian type, the details of its capitals resembling those of the old crypt of Nevers. Mr. Bond, referring to the crypt, or *confessio* of St. Germain, remarks that the burial chamber of a martyr was called a *confessio:* "where lay one who had confessed and given witness to his faith by his blood." The term "Martyrdom," applied to the north transept at Canterbury, is an exact equivalent to *confessio.*

Saint Germain, the missionary bishop, lived here, and died at Ravenna; but his body was brought back from Italy to his birthplace by five pious sisters, one of whom, canonised under the name of Sainte Maxime, lies buried in the abbey church founded by the great saint; where also, in the beautiful crypt, is the tomb of Germain himself, surrounded by a whole company of dead saints, among them the valiant Saint Loup, who, when bishop of Auxerre, drove out the Huns under Attila, and saved his city from destruction. One interesting point in connection with this abbey is that it is the mother-foundation of Selby in Yorkshire. There is a long and mythical legend on the subject, teeming of course with miracles, from which may be gathered that one Bernard of Auxerre wandered from his native town and settled down—why is not very clear—upon the banks of the river

Ouse, where he led the life of a hermit. The reports of his sanctity attracted to his cell many persons in the neighbourhood, influential men amongst them; and he attained such fame that his hermit's hut became the nucleus of a large monastery. However much of this is true, and however much legend, enough remains to show that the monks at Selby did come from Auxerre.

In addition to these three churches, it would be impossible to overlook St. Eusèbe, a church standing in the middle of the town, especially if it be the traveller's lot to stay at the excellent Hôtel de l'Épée, and to occupy a room giving on its court-yard. There cats, cooks, and chauffeurs combine to enliven the watches of the night, and when the morning dawns, and the "web of night undone," the jackdaws and the bells of St. Eusèbe announce that sleep is no longer befitting, and he realises that a restless night is the price to be cheerfully paid if he desires, as an architectural enthusiast, to do his duty by Auxerre.

Troyes, the ancient capital of Champagne, was formerly another "city of counts"—the residence of a long line of Thibauts, almost as famed in their day as the Fulks at Angers, and one of whom, called "le Chansonnier," might be compared to the minstrel King René. These counts of Champagne kept up

THE BRIDGE AND CATHEDRAL, AUXERRE

their state at Troyes until the fourteenth century, when the countship became merged in the French crown. The city likewise made of itself a landmark during the Hundred Years' War. After the battle of Agincourt it fell into the hands of the allied Burgundians and English; and the name of Troyes now recalls the triumph, as brief as it was splendid, of the English arms in France. By this time Henry V. had set his foot upon the steps of the French throne, and the famous treaty signed here in 1420 secured the succession to him and his heirs, and, to complete the alliance, gave him the hand of the French princess, Catherine, the betrothal taking place in the Cathedral, and the marriage itself in the church of Saint Jean. Here is a contemporary account of the proceedings by the chronicler Monstrelet: "At this period Henry, King of England, accompanied by his two brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and of Gloucester, the Earls of Huntington, Warwick, and Kyme, and many of the great lords of England, with about sixteen hundred combatants, the greater part of whom were archers, set out from Rouen, came to Pontoise, and then to Saint Denis. He crossed the bridge at Charenton and left part of his army to guard it, and thence advanced by Provins to Troyes in Champagne. The Duke of Burgundy and several of the nobility, to show him honour and respect, came

out to meet him, and conducted him to the hotel, where he was lodged with his princes, and his army was quartered in the adjacent villages. . . . When all relating to the peace had been concluded, King Henry, according to the custom of France, affianced the Lady Catherine. On the morrow of Trinity Day the King of England espoused her in the parish church near to which he was lodged; great pomp and magnificence were displayed by him and his princes as if he were at that moment king of all the world."

Ten years later, however, Joan of Arc captured the town on her march through France, and put an end to the English dominion. In 1525 Troyes was attacked by the Emperor Charles V., who burnt at least half the town, with the result that many of the old churches had to be rebuilt, and date therefore from the sixteenth century, with remains of earlier work here and there. Soon after the fire the city was overswept by the great wave of religious controversy which was to break over France in the latter years of the century, and since most of the inhabitants declared for the Huguenot cause, their fortunes and ultimate fate were none of the happiest. In 1562 the whole Huguenot population was driven out and compelled to fall back for safety upon the town of Bar-sur-Seine; and another decade saw a repetition

of the terrible day of Saint Bartholomew, when the Romanists in Troyes followed the ghastly example of their white-sleeved brothers in Paris, and massacred every Huguenot prisoner within the walls.

Historic interest at the present day divides the repute of Troyes with something less romantic—the system of weights and measures which we call "Troy weight," and which remains as a memorial of the mercantile fame of ancient Troyes. The fairs of Troyes date back to 1230, when Count Thibaut IV. granted to his subjects a municipal charter, and laid the foundations of a commercial repute which could vie with that of any town in France. From this time onwards Troyes occupied an important position in the commercial world, and became the resort of wealthy merchants from Italy and weavers with bales of rich stuffs from Flanders, to say nothing of the goldsmiths, silversmiths, and workers in precious stones who must have brought Troy weight into fame. Neither the Hundred Years' War nor the wars of the League appear to have affected the town's commerce to any great extent, but the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by forcing the Protestant population, which included the majority of the ablest citizens, to emigrate, struck a blow at the industry of Troyes from which it never recovered; and now-a-

days both population and commerce have fallen to a state so low that it might almost be called one of decay, compared with the brilliant busy life of the mediæval town. What a scene they must have afforded at fair-time, these narrow-built streets and small close squares, narrower and closer than ever we can picture them to-day, but alive with movement, laughter, above all with colour—such colour as your sober work-a-day crowd can never aspire to in these times!

Picturesque and lively as a French market of to-day undoubtedly is, with the red and green, russet and pearl-colour of its vegetables, the white caps of its women, the gay blues and crimsons of the umbrellas guarding the stalls, the laughter and chatter of the buyers, sellers, and idlers, it has nothing to compare with the wonderful colour-mass and movement of a mediæval crowd, above all in such a place as this, the fame of whose fairs might well have attracted buyers from all parts of Europe. Stately, bearded Italian merchants—men like Antonio of Venice with argosies on every sea—in furred cap and gold chain, dark-faced, keen-eyed Jews, young nobles, exquisite in silk and velvet, wandering minstrels fantastically arrayed, dancing-girls like bright-hued butterflies, all the good citizens of Troyes in their gayest holiday attire, and the inevi-

A STREET IN TROYES

table jester in his motley, skimming in and out of the crowd, shaking his cap and bells in every face—the many-coloured banners of the town guilds streaming in the breeze above their heads, and the summer sunshine flooding the whole scene, giving added light to every street-corner, added brilliancy to every hue. The Troyes of to-day is a picturesque town enough, with many beautiful timber-framed houses; but the light and life of the town went out with the departure of the fairs, and beyond its churches Troyes now has little to distinguish it from the hundreds of quondam-mediæval towns scattered through the length and breadth of France.

On our architectural pilgrimage through the town the Cathedral naturally claimed our first attention; but we had not got much further than admiration of the splendour of the stained glass, and a short analysis of the beauty of the interior, when a remorseless sacristan informed us that the Cathedral was about to close for two hours. Driven outside, the contemplation of the splendid Flamboyant west portal reminded us of what we have referred to elsewhere—that these deep-set porches in the French cathedrals are considered as lineal descendants of the ancient narthex. Troyes, Lâon, Bourges and many other churches lead one to an attempt to follow out the evolution of these great porches. In the an-

cient basilican churches the narthex was the first section of the building—an ante-temple, long and narrow, in front of the nave. In the primitive Church it was especially allotted to the monks and the women, and used for certain offices, such as rogations, supplications, and night watches; it was further destined as a place for catechumens and penitents, who were permitted to assist at Divine Service outside the Temple. Heretics and schismatics might also here attend and listen to the reading of the Scriptures, this privilege being accorded them in the hope of their ultimate conversion; and corpses were placed in the narthex during the performance of the funeral rites. In the Middle Ages the denomination narthex was given to closed porches of churches, and ceased to be any longer applicable to a portion of a religious edifice lying within the walls. It was ultimately replaced by the word *porch*. These porches were both open and closed and formed a kind of vestibule.

The baptism of children and not of adults rendered it unnecessary to provide for the preparation of converts before being introduced into the Church. There were no more catechumens undergoing their time of probation, and in consequence the spacious vestibule to which they had hitherto been relegated disappeared as an essential portion of a large church,

and was replaced by a porch which was either open or closed, and occupied a position in front of the nave similar to that in which its predecessor, the narthex, had stood. These porches being reserved for the faithful remained, *qua* porches, as very important annexes to the churches, and formed large vestibules, often closed, which ran along the outside of the western wall of a church, having sometimes the appearance of a cloister, as at Toury, which was built in 1230.

Under the porches before the main entrances of many ancient cathedrals bishops, emperors and honoured citizens were often buried, as the ecclesiastical law in the primitive Church did not allow people to be buried inside the walls of the sacred building. Many important services were held under these porches; prayers for the dead were offered up, ablutions performed by the faithful before entering the church, relics and images were exposed, and litanies chanted. Later it became absolutely necessary to keep them strictly closed on account of the abuse of the shelter of the porch by the erection of market stalls and booths on fair-days under the shadow of the church, and the crowd of buyers and sellers making the air ring with their noisy bargainings.

A further development was to make the porch a kind of arcaded *avant-porte* surmounted by a gable

with sculptured features. These decorated canopies were by degrees thrown back into the main wall, became merged into the mouldings of the doorway, and were finally lost as a separate feature in the highly ornamented and deeply splayed portal.

Fortunately the ecclesiastical interest of Troyes is not confined to one corner, and the churches of Saint Urbain and the Madeleine lie in one's path to the market-place along the very picturesque streets of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century houses, which offer every conceivable variation of roof and gable.

The beautiful details of the unfinished church of Saint Urbain may well have won for itself the reputation of equalling if not of surpassing anything of its kind either in France or Germany; and although it is still in the hands of the restorer, there is now no scaffolding to prevent one looking in admiration at the graceful choir and transepts. The detached *pignons* above the chancel window spring from the buttresses clear of the wall, and throw a deep shadow over the upper portion of the windows. This shadow gives an appearance of weight and stability to the building, which is certainly required as an assurance against the result of too daring construction.

In the Madeleine, which is not far from Saint Urbain, is a notable rood-screen, full of luxuriant

tracery and sculpture of a late Flamboyant period. It attracts attention, not because it fulfils any ceremonial requirements or forms any part of an architectural effect in the interior of the church, but rather on account of its singular appearance of being slung between two pillars.

Chapter Seventeen

MEAUX, SENLIS, AND BEAUVAIS

MEAUX is a beautifully situated little town on the banks of the Marne some thirty miles from Paris, on the way to the Champagne country. Its general appearance can best be gathered from the delightful public promenade along the river-side which is entered immediately on the right of the station. The Cathedral dates back to the early thirteenth century, but very shortly after it was finished, either owing to the work of construction being hurried or to the foundations being insecure, large cracks and actual shifting of the masonry declared themselves, and a great deal of remodelling and alterations became necessary. The vaulting and first stage of the choir aisles—or triforium ambulatory—were removed, the aisles being thereby doubled in height. The choir elevation is a very beautiful expression of thirteenth-century design. The transept is short, and has a large rose window and a richly-decorated portal.

It is said that at one time, namely in the thirteenth century, architects conceived the idea of covering the walls on the inside of the porch with some vast design of decoration, by which the colour poured into the church through the large rose-window should be enhanced by great spaces of painted wall-surface. This conception, however, was very short-lived, and towards the end of the century painted subjects were confined almost entirely to the windows; and the internal decoration of the *revers* of the porches was conceived, as at Meaux, more in an architectural spirit with pilasters, arcading, etc., as motives, rather than with features suggested by the painter's art.

Meaux as well as Lâon, Soissons, Beauvais, Noyon and other towns in the district felt the effects of the Jacquerie revolts in the thirteenth century. Indeed, many of the ladies who suffered from the horrors of the persecution at Beauvais fled at first to Meaux to escape the fury of the rebels; and once having got within the town, they did not dare to leave it, so that to all intents and purposes they were prisoners within its walls. Throughout the whole district bands of robbers and furious peasants infested the roads or lay in ambush to catch the unwary, and it was thus very dangerous to go from one town to another, even under an armed escort. Hearing of

the plight of these ladies in Meaux, among whom were the Duchesses of Orléans and Normandy, the Earl of Foix and the Captal de Buch resolved to go to their aid, and set out forthwith from Châlons, to find a great host of the peasantry also bound for the same place. The rebels had heard that Meaux was chiefly inhabited by refugee women and children, also that it contained a great deal of treasure; and they were now flocking down every road, from Valois, from Beauvoisie and from Paris, towards the little town upon the Marne. Foix and his company were received with the utmost joy, for the peasants had already begun to fill the streets and to do what damage they could, and the ladies were naturally in great alarm. "But when these banditti perceived such a troop of gentlemen, so well equipped, sally forth to guard the market-place, the foremost of them began to fall back. The gentlemen then followed them, using their lances and swords. When they felt the weight of their blows, they, through fear, turned about so fast, they fell one over the other. All manner of armed persons then rushed out of the barriers, drove them before them, striking them down like beasts, and clearing the town of them, for they kept neither regularity nor order, slaying so many that they were tired. They flung them in great heaps into the river. In short, they

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killed upwards of seven thousand. Not one would have escaped if they had chosen to pursue them further."

Another siege famous in the annals of Meaux is that during the wars of Henry V., when the English king encamped before the town in October, 1421, and set engines to batter down the gates and walls, having entrenched his own army meanwhile in a strong position between hedges and ditches. "The King of England," Monstrelet tells us, "was indefatigable in the siege of Meaux, and having destroyed many parts of the walls of the market-place, he summoned the garrison to surrender themselves to the King of France and himself, or he would storm the place. To this summons they replied that it was not yet time to surrender, on which the King ordered the place to be stormed. The assault continued for seven or eight hours in the most bloody manner; nevertheless, the besieged made an obstinate defence, in spite of the great numbers that were attacking them. Their lances had been almost all broken, but in their stead they made use of spits, and fought with such courage that the English were driven back from the ditches, which encouraged them much." This state of affairs lasted for six months; the garrison of Meaux, who seem to have behaved all through with the utmost gallantry, were in hopes of relief from the Dauphin,

but at the end of April, finding further resistance impossible, they gave themselves up into the hands of Henry. A treaty was set on foot whereby, "on the 11th day of May, the market-place and all Meaux were to be surrendered into the hands of the kings of France and England." The leaders were made prisoners of war, and the chief offender, the bastard of Vaurus, who "had in his time hung many a Burgundian and Englishman," was beheaded and hung as a warning on a tree outside the walls of the town. King Henry himself—adds the French chronicler—"was very proud of this victory, and entered the place in great pomp, and remained there some days with his princes to repose and solace himself, having given orders for the complete reparation of the walls that had been so much damaged by artillery at the siege."

Meaux is of course notably associated with Bossuet, the famous preacher, who was appointed to its bishopric in 1681. The study and garden where he wrote many of his sermons are still shown among his other memorials in the Évêché, near the Cathedral.

"Dans les choses nécessaire, l'unité; dans les douteuses, la liberté; dans tous les cas, la charité." In these few words one may look for the keynote of Bossuet's whole life. Temperate in all things, yet possessed with an eloquence more moving, it was said, than that of any man since the days of the

THE OLD MILLS AT MEAUX

Christian Fathers, and employed always in the cause of the Church he loved so well, the "Aigle de Meaux" well deserves his place among the greatest ecclesiastics France has ever known, and France, just at this time, was rich in ecclesiastical genius. There was Fénélon at Cambrai and Mascaron at Tulle, there were Massillon and Bourdaloue, Arnauld and Fleury—all of them men of note, both in the pulpit and in the world of books; but Bossuet stands out before them all.

He made an early entrance into the cultivated world, preaching his first sermon, upon a subject chosen at random, in the salon of the Hotel Rambouillet, when hardly out of his teens; and the Marquis de Feuquières, who had introduced him into this society of Précieuses, soon found reason to be proud of his protégé. The young man was destined to go on as he had begun; a few more years saw him established as Canon of Metz, the close friend of Condé and of the Calvinist Paul Ferri, with whom he never tired of disputing theological questions in a perfectly amicable spirit, acting up to his maxim of "liberty in doubtful things"; and finally his reputation brought him to Paris, where he preached during Lent, 1656, and brought before the world the sermon as he created it, purified from the profanities of an immoral age, strengthened by his steadfast sim-

plicity, and quickened by the fire of his eloquence. Bossuet found that in spite of himself his fame as an orator—a fame after which he had never striven—was firmly established in the capital, and after he had preached before the king in the chapel of the Louvre his success was practically assured. Honours and dignities came fast upon him; he became Bishop of Condom, and in the following year (1670) was entrusted with the education of the Dauphin, while the Académie Française opened its doors to his genius, and in 1681 he was appointed to the See of Meaux. Hardly had Bossuet settled down, however, in the quiet little *évêché,* with its pleasant green garden, than he was called out again into the world of noise and controversy. In 1682 Louis XIV. convoked the famous assembly of clergy to discuss the breach which had lately disclosed itself between the State of France and the Papacy. The king contended for the right of patronage over any vacant sees or benefices, claiming that so long as they remained unoccupied, their revenues fell due to the Crown; and called together the clergy of the realm to uphold his right and to draw up a code of rules that should set a line between spiritual and temporal authority. Bossuet preached the sermon which was to open the Convocation; and his clear practical sense and eloquent denunciation of the encroachments of the Papacy

destroyed the remnants of Pope Innocent's power in France. He summed up the case in four clauses. First, "That the Pope has no temporal power over kings"; secondly, "That his spiritual authority is inferior to that of a general assembly"; thirdly, "That, in consequence, the use of this authority ought to be regulated by the canons of the Church and by customs generally approved"; and last, "That the papal decision on matters of faith is only infallible by consent of the Church." Thus did Bossuet establish the privileges and the liberty of the Gallican Church.

As soon as possible the great bishop disengaged himself from the affairs of the nation, and was occupied, not in gaining fresh honours, but with the care of his diocese. The picture of his last years is a graceful and pleasant one, and shows the great man leading the life of a simple country priest; writing sermons in his study or garden, directing his convents, schools and hospitals, visiting his poor and sick people, even catechising the children of Meaux; and at times retiring into the seclusion of the monastery of La Trappe, to gather strength and courage for the better fulfilment of his pastoral duties.

The old timber water-mills behind the Town Hall are the outward sign of one of the great industries of Meaux. They have withstood for many generations

the rushing torrents of the Marne, which threaten to undermine the starlings and timbers of the mills and to engulf them in its waters. These for some reason or other are almost as green as the outpourings of the Rhone at Geneva. It would be interesting to know if Meaux possessed any feudal right over the neighbouring peasants, compelling them to come and wait their turn at the mill, and pay whatever price might be demanded, and forbidding them, even in times of heavy yield, to get their corn ground elsewhere. Such oppressions actually existed in the villages attached to the great châteaux, where the seigneur had a right to keep huge rabbit-warrens and pigeon-houses, whose inhabitants devastated, year in, year out, the surrounding crops of the peasants.

The little city of Senlis, with its girdle of Roman walls and watch towers, is one of the most attractive places within reach of Paris. It is situated about thirty-five miles to the northeast, in the midst of the great forest land of Hallatte and Chantilly. Until the dissolution of the Carlovingian empire Senlis enjoyed the privileges of a royal residence, and, indeed, down to the time of Henri de Navarre the kings of France continued to visit the city, and were lodged in a castle built on the site of the Roman prætorium. The ruins of this castle, some of which date from the eleventh century, may still be seen among the attrac-

tions of Senlis; and of even greater interest are the Roman ramparts which surround the town and which were built when it still held its position as the township of the Silvanectes. These walls, "twenty-three feet high and thirteen feet thick, are, with those of St. Lizier (Ariège) and Bourges, the most perfect in France. They enclosed an oval area 1024 feet long from east to west and 794 feet wide from north to south. At each of the angles formed by the broken lines of which the circuit of 2756 feet is composed, stands or stood a tower; numbering originally twenty-eight and now only sixteen, they are semicircular in plan, and up to the height of the wall are unpierced. The Roman city had only two gates; the present number is five."

As one approaches the town from the station through the boulevard, the Renaissance tower of Saint Pierre and the beautiful *flèche* of the Cathedral stand right ahead. The first of these two churches is now desecrated and converted into a large market hall, having previously been used as cavalry barracks. It is short and broad, having only three bays to the nave, two to the choir, and an apse of three lights; but it has one very marked feature, which is also seen, though to a lesser extent, in the Cathedral of Saint Gatien at Tours—the axis of the choir trends northwards, making with the nave an

angle of some seventeen to twenty degrees. There is a certain amount of early Gothic work worth notice, but the prevailing style is Flamboyant; in the two last side chapels of the choir some curious vaulting is to be found, resembling rude attempts at fan tracery with heavy keyed pendants.

The Cathedral of Notre-Dame covers during its construction a period of some four hundred years, and is probably only part of what was originally designed. The glory of the building is the beautiful spire to the south-west tower. Rising from a base octagonal in plan, the angles are lightened by detached pillars supporting a pyramidal canopy; the upper dormer windows are high and lancet-shaped, with the back of their gables sloping downwards and forming a sharp angle with the richly crocketed spire. Internally the church is a mixed product of the Transition and Flamboyant architects; the large clerestory windows may have been rebuilt later when the vaulting was constructed. In the ambulatory behind the altar the twelfth-century capitals remain, showing archaic Romanesque sculpture; and traces of this early work are to be found in many other parts of the building. The large west door is of the Chartres type; in the tympanum are the figures of our Lord and the Virgin Mary, with a representation of the resurrection of the dead; some of the figures are

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flying upwards, while others are being tenderly awakened by angels swinging censers.

Long before the train arrives at Beauvais the Cathedral is seen like a huge fortress in the distance, overtopping the quiet, modest landscape of the Thérain valley; and its great size is more acutely felt as one approaches its south doorway along the streets of little white-painted houses and shop-fronts. The immediate effect of the interior of this marvellous building is startling. Whatever emotion has been aroused in the architectural traveller by the glories of Amiens, Chartres, or Bourges, is for the moment entirely eclipsed by the first view of the choir of Beauvais, whose clerestory windows soar upwards with such a restless vitality as almost to pierce the vaulting. These choir bays look like shafts of masonry so elongated, so delicate, that one trembles for their stability. And this sensation gradually increases. The sense of strength and repose gives way to a feeling that this great "church in the air" is struggling against dissolution, and that its vast flying buttresses are only just sufficient to withstand the tremendous strain that is constantly being exerted on the building. It is only fair, however, to the architect of Beauvais choir to say that he was hampered by the want of means and probably also by the insufficient site assigned to him for the planning out of his

Cathedral. Had he worked under more favourable conditions he would have accomplished "an incomparable work," for it is not, as Viollet-le-Duc remarks, "the theory" that was fatal to its construction, but the execution, which is poor and mediocre. The lesson learnt from the Beauvais architect's temerity on the one hand, and from his beautiful disposition of plan on the other, was of the greatest value to the designers of other Cathedrals executed at the same time—notably that of Cologne, which was constructed more or less contemporaneously with Beauvais.

West of the Cathedral is the *Basse Œuvre*, a building which Fergusson describes as an example of the Latin style, and a stepping-stone from the Roman basilica to the Gothic church. This intermediate style is noticeable in the Romanesque church of S. Vicenzo alle Fontane in Rome, where the bay is divided simply into pier arch and clerestory, showing in very simple terms an arrangement nearly approaching to Gothic.

Of the history of Beauvais there is but little to be said, for it possesses none worthy of the name, or rather—since every town must have a story of some kind—none which associates itself to any great degree with outside events. It was established in the Roman era as the capital of the Bellovaci, under the name

of Cæsaromagus; it was Christianised by Saint Lucian, who for his good works suffered martyrdom within the town; and later on it became the head of a countship. This dignity, however, Beauvais did not long retain, for in the tenth century the temporal power of the count was vested in the spiritul power of the bishop, and any celebrity which the town may have attained was henceforth of purely ecclesiastical order.

It did, however, play a prominent part in the peasant revolt known as the "Jacquerie" in the fourteenth century. A body of peasants, "without any leader," says Froissart, rose up with the intent to exterminate the upper classes—a forerunner of the Revolution—and perpetrated the most horrible atrocities upon every knight and noble they could lay hands on in Beauvais. "They said that the nobles of the kingdom of France, knights and squires, were a disgrace to it, and that it would be a very meritorious act to destroy them all; to which proposition every one assented as a truth, and added, shame befall him who should be the means of preventing the gentlemen from being wholly destroyed."

When the revolt grew, instead of being crushed, the "gentlemen of Beauvoisie" were forced to send for help out of France, since matters were come to such a pass that "in the bishoprics of Noyon, Lâon

and Soissons, there were upwards of one hundred castles and good houses of knights and squires destroyed." Aid soon came, notably from Flanders, Hainault and Navarre, the king of Navarre especially signalising himself by putting three thousand rebels to death in one day. "When they were asked," says the chronicler, "for what reason they acted so wickedly, they replied they knew not, but they did so because they saw others do it; and they thought that by this means they should destroy all the nobles and gentlemen in the world."

Edward III. besieged Beauvais in 1346, but without success, and it only fell into English hands in 1420 through the treachery of Bishop Pierre Cauchon, whose name also appears as one of the witnesses against Joan of Arc at Rouen eleven years later. The memory of this latter offence so preyed upon his mind that when he became bishop of Lisieux —having presumably been ejected from the see of Beauvais—Couchon sought to expiate his sin by dedicating a chapel to the Virgin in the Cathedral of Saint Pierre.

Hearing of the siege of Compiègne by the Burgundian forces, Joan had left Charles's army, which was still dawdling by the Loire in a state of inaction, and marched off to Compiègne to relieve his party there. Arrived without the town, she soon headed

a sortie against the Burgundians; they were driven back, and it is probable that the expedition would have been attended by the success which, to do her justice, had up to this moment crowned the efforts of the Maid, had not a body of Englishmen come up unexpectedly between her and the town and driven her into a corner. She was of course speedily captured. As soon as the news reached Paris both the University and the Vicar of the Inquisition demanded her person. Cauchon, however, stood firm. The Maid, he contended, had been captured within the diocese of Beauvais, and he, as the foremost prelate of the English party, claimed the right of putting her on trial; and after having paid to Burgundy 10,000 livres for this right, sent the Maid to Rouen, there to stand on her trial for sorcery, before a court of which Cauchon was president; and this fact alone might reasonably destroy all hope for poor Joan.

Another fourteenth-century bishop of Beauvais brought his diocese before the world in no small degree. Jean de Dormans was not only bishop; he became Chancellor of France, and obtained from Rome the rank of a cardinal, under the title of the Four Crowned Saints. In Paris Dormans endowed a foundation which still bears the name of Collège de Beauvais, though what remains of the building serves as barracks, and the light of learning has left

its precincts for ever. The old college is now united to its neighbour, the Collège de Presle; but the fourteenth-century chapel dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist still stands almost intact, though it, too, has been desecrated, and now serves the use of the military occupiers. Formerly there stood within this chapel six life-size figures, representing three men and three women of the Dormans family, and it is believed that when mediæval fragments were pieced together to form the chapel of Abélard and Héloise, which is now part of the burial-ground of Père-la-Chaise, the figure of one of these ladies of the fourteenth century was used to represent that of Héloise.

One name there is on the page of their history which the inhabitants of this town remember with a veneration almost equal to that which the Orléannais regard Joan of Arc, and whose memory even now receives an annual tribute. It is that of another Jeanne, poor and obscure, who rose to heroism in the moment of her city's danger, and who, though she did not lead a mighty host to victory nor bring a monarch back to his own, yet saved her city from the encroachments of Burgundy, and gave the women of Beauvais a right to their country's esteem. The besieging army of Charles the Bold probably never received such a surprise as on that day in the year of grace 1472, when Jeanne Hachette led her *conci-*

toyennes through the streets of Beauvais, menaced the foe from the ramparts, and actually bore away with her own hands one of the Burgundian standards. The banner is still kept in the Hôtel-de-Ville; and every year, on the feast of Ste. Angadrème, a grand procession marches through the streets, in which the women are given the right of precedence over the men, in memory of the brave deeds of Jeanne and her sisters.

Chapter Eighteen

PARIS AND SOME OF ITS CHURCHES

AS a Cathedral city, Paris hardly comes within the scheme of this book. It has been written about so much and so often, and occupies, both architecturally and historically, such a position as would scarcely justify any but a full and detailed description. This great city, the living, moving source of one of the greatest nations of to-day, and at one time the mainspring of Europe itself, is not to be passed over with a few terse remarks; it is as though one tried to compress the history of France itself into a single chapter. On the one hand, a short sketch can hardly hope to do justice to Paris; on the other, to describe it at such length as it deserves would not be dealing fairly by the lesser towns, and further, this length would be so great as to render absurd its inclusion in a book of traveller's notes. Rather let it be regarded here in the light of *point d'appui* from which other places may be visited which do not lie on the direct route

from Paris to the provinces. Without attempting any architectural description, however, it may be as well, before we pass outside the city walls, to mention three churches within Paris of which illustrations are given here, and to offer the briefest possible outline of their early history and foundation, as well as that of the great city of which they form a part.

"Paris did not, like London, simply grow into the capital of a kingdom already existing. The city created first the county and then the kingdom, of which it was successively the head." In those days Paris ranked no higher than Soissons, Sens, Lâon, Orléans, or Rouen; and in ecclesiastical dignity it was inferior to some of them, being, it is true, an episcopal see, but not a metropolitan. Certainly, as we have seen, it was approved as a military station by Cæsar, and beloved as a residence by Julian; and the great position the city now holds in modern Europe and the modern world is rather apt to bias our estimate of these early honours, which were undoubtedly shared by many other of the Gallic cities. Because Paris is now a metropolitan see, the centre of political and social France, we have a tendency to think that in all times the city must have ruled her neighbour towns in this way; whereas it was only by very slow degrees—long after it had become the seat of royalty and the nominal capital of France—

that Paris acquired an influence beyond the bounds of her own territories. The great lords of Burgundy, of Aquitaine, of Anjou, of Champagne—they were vassals to the king, they paid him homage, they gave him their military service, but they and their domains formed no part of France; they were almost as separate from any head or centre as were the wide-scattered Teutonic states east of the Rhine. Nor was this felt to be in any way a disadvantage; the kings in Paris would doubtless have welcomed the firm allegiance of these kings in all but name, because it would have meant a fresh access of power, an added strength wherewith to face their other foes; but no idea of national unity had any place in their calculation. Paris had made for herself a dominion, and the time was to come when that dominion should stretch from the sea on the north, south and west, to the river and to the mountains on the east; but as yet that time had not arrived.

One more event which took place after Paris became the capital of France may be recorded here. This is the attempted siege in the days of Joan of Arc, which followed as the sequel to the king's coronation at Rheims. Having subdued so many cities in the north of France, and given to Charles VII. the crown of his ancestors, it was but natural that Joan should be anxious to lead him in triumph into

THE PONT MARIE, PARIS

his capital, which at present declared for the enemy, and was occupied by Cardinal Beaufort's English troops and the army of Burgundy. The newly-crowned king, however, apparently considered that he had borne his share of the burden in the late proceedings at Rheims, and seemed in no hurry to march upon Paris. Riding through the smaller towns, seeing their gates flung open wide to him, and receiving the homage and acclamations of the people, were occupations far more congenial to his indolent tastes than bestirring himself to take the field again; and to their infinite annoyance Joan and d'Alençon perceived that he was gradually but surely working his way down to his castles on the Loire, from whose pleasant meadows they knew well that he would never return. The only wonder is that the Maid did not lose all patience and leave this dilatory prince to his fate. Instead of this she set out with the Duc d'Alençon to Saint Denis, leaving Charles at Compiégne, whence he followed them, "very sore against his will," as far as Senlis. Meanwhile each day of delay gave the English time to strengthen their position within the capital; and Joan found that having brought the king to Senlis was by no means the same thing as conquering his unwillingness to strike what she and her party believed might be, if rightly directed, the final blow. Each time the Maid and

d'Alençon set out to invest Paris, messages came from the royal camp, commanding them to desist and return to Saint Denis. Finally the truth came out; the king cared more for peace and ease on the Loire than for glory in war, and desired to leave the camp. Had Joan believed less firmly in the divine right of kings, it is probable that she would have rebelled and besieged Paris on her own responsibility; on the other hand, had Charles been left to the counsels of d'Alençon and the brave captains Dunois and La Hire, there is reason to suppose that he might have been persuaded to follow where Joan led, and might under her guidance have subdued Paris in a very short time. But there were the king's favourites to reckon with, and these were not men of war, but of peace, and not always of peace with honour—the foolish La Tremouille and the crafty Archbishop of Rheims, one of Joan's worst opposers—and these advisers easily worked upon the king's indolent good-nature to find in the eagerness of the Maid an undue desire for fresh conquest. As it was, Joan saw nothing before her but to obey the man to whom, as she believed, God had given the right to go or stay, to fight or to lie in peace, as his Majesty chose. She went to the statue of the Virgin at Saint Denis, bearing her armour; and there, kneeling in the church, she dedicated to Our Lady of Victories the helmet,

hauberk and coat of mail in which she had done so many great feats of arms; and then rose and followed her king on his journey to the pleasant lands of the Loire.

The early history of Paris lies buried in the unrecorded pages of the life of primæval man. Its origin is humble in comparison with that of other capitals, although it bears a strong analogy to those surrounding physical conditions to which Venice owed its existence. Its cradle, according to M. Hoffbauer, *Paris à traverse les ages,* was a small narrow island in the middle of the young Seine, which had then cut for itself its channel through the alluvial plains which had been left by the retiring sea towards the end of the Geological Tertiary period at the close of the glacial epoch. It was part of a group of five islands, of which three very soon disappeared, their soil being probably used either for embankments or for purposes of defence. As in the great estuary leading up to the morass surrounding London, many changes had been wrought by the hand of man in the general appearance of the Paris basin. It is true that the great embankments constructed by the Romans to keep the waters of the Thames within defined limits are not to be traced in the valley of the Seine, yet the rude habitations of wattle huts built on whatever hillocks were attainable entailed

embankments to a certain extent which should keep the Seine within its bounds at times of extraordinary flood. As it stands to-day Paris is in one of the most fertile parts of the territory; it is on the banks of a great river which brings to it by its main stream and by its affluents the tribute of the richest provinces; it is surrounded by materials most necessary for the construction of its public and private edifices; and it is endowed by nature with all the fruitful resources tending towards the aggrandisement both of power and fortune.

The condition of the early inhabitants of the Paris basin was that of one continual warfare against the denizens of the jungle, which with its rich and abundant vegetation covered the surrounding country. Caverns and other places chosen for their abodes were disputed with lions, hyenas and tigers. The chase was their only means of subsistence (the art of husbandry being entirely unknown), and the number of stone hatchets and harpoons, fishing-hooks, lances, &c., found deeply buried in the alluvial soil, bear testimony to the struggle for existence amongst the early inhabitants of the Seine valley.

Cæsar, when he was appointed commander of the Gauls in B.C. 59, found their central point of Paris inhabited by a Cymric or Celtic population, which he calls Gauls in his language but Celts in their own,

and separated from the Belgæ by the Seine and Marne. Cæsar wrote the place "Lutetia," and when he convoked the inhabitants of Gaul to this town the neighbouring tribe was designated as "Parisii," and allied to the powerful clan of the Senones.

With reference to the meaning of the word "Parisii," M. Bulet, in the "Dictionnaire Celtique," says that "bar" or "par" means in Celtic a boat (*bateau*), and that the low Bretons call the cargo of a boat "far." Herodotus (book ii., 96), in his description of the method of floating boats down stream on the Nile by means of a raft fastened on in front with a stone dragging behind, calls the boat "baris," and says that some of them are many thousand talents burthen. They were probably flat-bottomed, and similar to those now seen on the rivers. The Celtic word "par," signifying a boat, might well have produced the name Parisii, meaning boatmen, men who passed all their life in the "baris."

The most ancient emblem of Lutetia which has been preserved from antiquity is that of the prow of a boat which one sees sculptured on the springing of the vault of the Roman palace of the Thermes, built on the left bank of the Seine; the powerful association of the Nautæ Parisiaci, which is found at the head of the Parisian Navigation represented by the prow of a boat, has therefore a direct Celtic

or Gallic origin. Living only in rude cabins the early inhabitants naturally possessed no public building. Cæsar therefore conceived the idea of convoking the Gaulish chiefs into one central place or forum, and ordered to be built a "Suggestum," a tribune from which he could harangue the assembled headmen. This is considered by some French architects as the earliest indication of their *édilité naissánte*. As further evidence of their building and engineering capability, the inhabitants of Lutetia threw out bridges to join their island to the main banks of the river. Cæsar frequently refers to the bridges built by the Gauls, such as the one at Melun, on the Seine, another across the Allier, near Vichy, of which ancient foundations and piers have been found, another at Orléans, and of such slender construction as to have especially attracted his attention, and, finally, the bridge of Lutetia across the main arm of the Seine, the predecessor of the present Pont Notre Dame, which has also left traces of its ancient piers.

In Rome the Nautæ Tiberis were a corporation who enjoyed the privilege of carrying corn and other produce from Ostia to the capital; similar associations existed in Gaul in addition to the Nautæ Parisiaci, and on a wall of the amphitheatre of Nîmes is an inscription in which as many as forty places

are mentioned where corporations enjoying the same privileges and immunities existed. No wonder the territory of the Parisii increased in commercial activity. Watered by the Seine, the Marne and the Oise, its trade routes by land and by water were fully organised and guarded by powerful associations which existed almost before the Roman Conquest, and attracted the attention of the writer Strabo. It soon developed under such advantages into a prosperous and enlightened city. Roman buildings took the place of the Gallic huts, Roman laws governed the city, Roman customs and manners prevailed amongst the inhabitants, and by the time the first messengers of Christianity had penetrated into Gaul Lutetia had become a city not of the Gauls, but of the Romans. Curiously enough it was from Rome also that these early messengers came, to preach their doctrine to a Roman city. The pioneers were Saint Denis, generally confounded, for the sake of the antiquity of the Gallican Church, with the convert of Saint Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, and two companions, Eleutherius and Rusticus; and their work was carried on by Martin of Tours, one of the bravest soldiers of the Emperor Julian, who left the army to preach the faith in Gaul, and to stamp out the cult of the old pagan gods. Speaking of Julian, moreover, may serve to remind us that it was at

Paris that he was first proclaimed emperor; here was his palace before his imperial honours came upon him, and here, he declares in his own writings, were spent the three happiest winters of his life, showing that even in these early times Lutetia was a fair and pleasant city, as it is to-day.

In the following centuries Gaul was overrun with tribes from the east, Goths and Visigoths, Alemnanni and Huns, Burgundians and Franks. The last-named broke down the Roman defences all over the land and seized upon Paris. A new era now began for the city. Under Clovis, the first Frank king, it became the official capital of the State in 508, and from this time forward takes its place as one of the great cities of France. After the conversion of Clovis, abbeys and churches were built, great bishops and great saints preached and wrote their message, and indeed the eccleciastical fabric of the city seems to have grown up more quickly than the civil fabric, until the time of Charlemagne, when craftsmen's guilds were established, Jewish capitalists admitted within the walls, and a mercantile reputation founded. Then a second time the work of the conquerors seemed to be undone. The Northmen, more terrible invaders than Goths or Franks, plundered the coast-lands and presently swept up the Seine past Rouen to Paris, where they worked such havoc as

the town had never before known. The streets were set in flames, the monasteries were sacked and burnt, the priests and monks were massacred without mercy; yet all this evil was to end in better things. The very persistency of the Normans in besieging and pillaging a town four and five times, argued that the town itself must be worth the trouble, and the "lords" of Paris speedily began to look to its safety. Weak, foolish Charles the Fat could devise no better plan than the cowardly one of bribing the invaders to retreat; but Eudes, Count of Paris, knew that this would only be an inducement to them to come again, and determined once and for all to rid his city, at least, of this scourge. This he did with such effect that the crown of France was given to him and the inefficient Charles deposed. It was his nephew, Hugh the Great, who ruled at Paris in Rolf's day, and waged constant war with Neustria and Charles the Simple, the last of the Carlovingian kings, on the hill-crest at Lâon. Then, at the end of the tenth century, began the feudal monarchy under the Capetian dynasty. The first of the line was the eldest son of Hugh the Great, and the connections which he brought with him promised well for the prestige of his new kingdom. On the one side, he was brother-in-law to the Norman Duke, Richard the Fearless; on the other, his own brother Odo was Duke of Bur-

gundy; in his own right he was lord of Picardy, of Maine, of Chartres, of Tours, of Blois, and of Orléans; and his bond with the Church was further strengthened by the fact that he held the lay abbacies of Saint Martin, near Tours, and Saint Denis, near Paris. Thus the kingdom with which Hugh Capet began his reign was a fairly compact strip of land, having as boundaries Flanders to the north, Aquitaine to the south, Champagne to the east, and Normandy to the west. Of this kingdom Paris was nearly the actual geographical centre, and soon became the political centre also.

The early importance of Paris in the tenth century is very different to that of London. Paris at this time was a military position of growing importance, both from its central situation and its place on the island in the Seine. London on her Thames had an almost similar position, but she derived her power not merely from her Teutonic conquerors, but also from her early connection with Roman and Celtic Britain; while as a military stronghold she was no less to be desired.

The eastern point of the city, where the only bridge then existed, traversing the Seine in the exact place where now stands the Pont Notre Dame, a point where the roads through the province converged, was already a place sacred to the Gauls. Here were per-

formed rites and sacrifices to their mysterious divinities in an underground church which existed in the third century. Probably the tradition of dark deeds of persecution of the early Christians, human sacrifices, and missionaries suffering death in the cages of lions which were kept for the purpose of exhibitions, prevented the Parisian boatmen, when they heard of the wonderful tidings of Galilee, from using this Gaulish building, so full of terrible reminiscences, as their first church. The site of the Temple of Jupiter was chosen for the establishment of a church which should stamp out the heathen religion, crush with its heel the serpent's head and build upon its ruins a temple of the Holy Cross. About 375, on the site of the Temple of Jupiter, was built a church dedicated to Saint Etienne, which may be considered as the first Cathedral of Paris.

To the splendour of this early basilica, built by Childebert in the early Latin style, with its marble columns, some of which are now in the Musée de Cluny, the monk Fortunatus bears witness, and his description of the edifice is thus given in M. Hoffbauer's book on Paris: "Le vaisseau de cette église repose sur des colonnes de marbre, et le soin avec lequel on l'entretient en augment la beauté. Le premier il fut éclairé de fenêtres ornées de verres transparents par lesquels on reçoit la lumière. On dirait

que la main d'un ouvrier habile a emprisonné le jour dans le sanctuaire. Les feux tremblants de l'aurore naissante semblant se jouer jusque dans les lambris, et le temple est éclairé par la charté du jour même, quand le soliel ne se montre pas. Le roi Childebert, animé d'un zèle particulier pour cette église destinée à son peuple, l'a dotée de richesses qui ne doivent jaimais s'épuiser; toujours passioné pour les intèrêts de la religion, il s'est empressé d'augmenter ses ressources. Nouveau Melchisédech, notre roi est en même temps un pontife qui remplit exactement ses devoirs de fidèle comme ses devoirs de pasteur. Bien qu'occupé dans le palais qu'il habite du soin de rendre la justice, son plus grand désir est d'imiter l'example des saints évêques. Il quitte la première charge pour en remplir une autre avec plus d'honneur, et le souvenir de ses grandes actions lui assure l'immortalité."

By the twelfth century the basilica has disappeared, and its place has been taken, not by a single church, but by two churches side by side—Sainte Marie on the north, Saint Etienne on the south. At the beginning of the century Saint Etienne was the more important of the two, having escaped plunder at the hands of the Normans, who wrought considerable destruction in the sister church; but a twelfth-century archdeacon, Etienne de Garlande, took upon

himself the task of restoring Sainte Marie, which became known as the *nova ecclesia,* and formed the foundation of the great basilica planned by Maurice de Sully. This church, begun in 1163, was to unite Saint Etienne and Sainte Marie; the foundation stone was laid by Pope Alexander III., and in 1218 the remains of the old church of Saint Etienne were destroyed to make way for the south aisle of Notre Dame. The work went on into the thirteenth century; the great west portal was probably finished about 1223, and those of the transepts some forty years later.

"There are absolutely only these two churches (Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle) left standing in the island of the city, and there is nothing in the history of Paris which more clearly exhibits the modern disposition to make a *tabula rasa* of the past." In the Middle Ages the great Cathedral of Paris—"cathedral" since the twelfth century—stood in its island of La Cité amidst a perfect cluster of lesser churches, of which only the chapel of Saint Louis remains. Mr. Hamerton, whose words are quoted above, gives quite a considerable list of them in his "Paris in Old and Present Times," Sainte Geneviève, Saint Jean le Rond, Saint Denis du Pas, and its brother church of La Chartre—these are but a few of their names, and yet these names are all that

now remain of churches where mediæval knights and burghers and artificers worshipped, and into whose building mediæval architects, unknown and forgotten, put their best work and their highest service; even their sites are, in most cases, undiscoverable amongst the great mass of buildings, and bright wide streets, and green gardens of Paris as we know it. Some of these churches, like Saint Aignan and Saint Germain-le-Vieux, have left a few isolated columns and stones, but to find these, as one writer observes, "il faudrait pénétrer dans les maisons et se livrer à des recherches." Another, the old Madeleine, has suffered an even worse fate, its last remaining chapel being now transformed into a wine-shop at the corner of the Rue des Marmousets; a private house now stands upon the site of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, built, says an inscription on the façade, in the middle of the twelfth century, and demolished as late as 1837; and as for Saint Michel du Palais, within whose walls Archibishop Maurice de Sully baptised Philip Augustus in 1165, nothing remains to the memory of the Archangel but the bridge over the Seine. "'There is my bridge still,' Saint Michael may think, 'but as for my church I seek for it in vain.'" These vanished churches are too many all to be numbered here, since in La Cité alone there were, up to the eighteenth century, no less than seventeen of

NÔTRE DAME, PARIS

them, and outside the walls of the city there were many more.

Happily Notre Dame has better withstood the attacks of time and all the accidents of fire, plunder, and desecration. Five years or so after the completion of the western façade a fire broke out, and in the restoration the double-arched buttresses of the former apse disappeared, and the windows were enlarged in accordance with the growing love of light which was being manifested in other cathedrals all through France. In more modern times—towards the middle of the eighteenth century—the extraordinary taste of the late Renaissance period ordered the removal of all the stained glass both of nave and choir—leaving, however, the western rose window and the two in the transepts—and this is, of course, a loss that can never be repaired, although the restorations of Viollet-le-Duc have probably, as Mr. Hamerton says, gone some way towards bringing back the original effect of light in the interior of the church. The exterior of the nave likewise suffered not a little from the doubtless well-meaning zeal of an unarchitectural age, which had literally stripped it bare of all ornament: "One after another the architects had suppressed the advancing parts of the buttresses between the chapels, the gables, the friezes, the balustrades—in one word, the entire ornamentation of these same chapels, the

pinnacles which decorated the tops of the buttresses, with the statues which accompanied them and their flowering spires, the picturesque gargoyles which rendered the services of throwing the rain-water to a distance from the walls."

"We may take it for granted," Mr. Lonergan says in his "Historic Churches of Paris," "that those who dedicated the church to the Virgin were not influenced alone by the fact that a previous temple in her honour had stood on the banks of the river, but by the impetus given to what Protestants call her 'worship' and Catholics her 'cult' or devotion in the twelfth century." From the earliest times there existed, especially among sailors and fishermen, the feeling of devotion to the Virgin Mary. They prayed to her who held the Divine Infant on her knees to intercede for the lives of men who sailed across the waters on dark and starless nights. This worship of the Virgin steadily grew all over France, and the founders of the great monastic orders—Saint Augustin, Saint Benedict, and Saint Francis, and the famous Saint Bernard of Clairvaulx—are all included by Dante as paying special devotion to the Virgin; and history has furnished us with many other names, amongst which are those of Hildebert, the bishop of Le Mans, Yves and Pierre, bishops of Chartres, and the scholar of St. Denis, Pierre Abé-

lard. At no time was this more noticeable than in the centuries following the completion of Notre Dame. In consequence of this great growth of Mary-worship, the Virgin came to be regarded as the protectress of the people—as, indeed, she is to this day—and the Church of Notre Dame began to be the people's church, a kind of centre, civil as well as ecclesiastical, of the city life. For instance, Notre Dame in Paris became not only the house of worship and prayer, but "the house both of God and man," and this through no irreverent feeling. The *parvis* or garden in front of the Cathedral became a gathering-ground for the townsfolk—a remnant of this feeling, it would seem, still exists in the markets which in lesser towns are nearly always held round the church—fairs took place there, the buyers bringing their purchases to be blessed by the priest as they passed the church steps; and the various festivals of the Church gave rise to secular feasts and sports of all kinds, as well as to the performance of the miracle plays which were attended by the people with such simple wonder and reverence, and which in England laid the foundation of the secular comedies.

The monks of Saint Germain originally came from Autun, and at first acknowledged the rule of Saint Basil, which was afterwards exchanged for that of Saint Benedict. After its restoration in the eleventh

century the foundations became very powerful, and round its walls grew up the *bourg* of Saint Germain; later it became the Faubourg of that name, the "intellectual quarter" of Paris, the haunt of all the most brilliant spirits of the day; whose streets were trodden by great men, and marked by the footsteps of genius.

The Abbey Church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés likewise owes its existence to the Merovingian Childebert. In the sixth century Childebert went on an expedition against the Visigoths in Spain, and returned triumphant with a number of sainted relics, among them the tunic of Saint Vincent and a magnificent gold cross; and in honour of these trophies and for their safe keeping he built in the fields outside Paris a monastery, which was consecrated by Saint Germain, so the legend says, the very day of its royal founder's death. The abbey was originally dedicated, in memory of the relics which it guarded, to Saint Vincent and the Holy Cross; but after the death of its first abbot, Saint Germain, in 576, it became known by his name. Before the building of the Abbey of Saint Denis, Saint-Germain-des-Prés was the burial place of the royal house, and a long line of Childeberts, Chilperics, and Chlothars lie at rest beneath its stones. It was pillaged and burnt by the Normans no less than five times, and therefore,

ST. GERMAIN DES PRÉS, PARIS

when the Abbot Morard set about rebuilding it in the eleventh century, very little was left of Childebert's old foundation. Part of Morard's work may still be seen in the present nave of the church; the choir and apse were built later, and date from the second half of the twelfth century, the church being finally consecrated by Pope Alexander III. in 1163.

The wealth of the monastery even so late as the eighteenth century may be gauged by the indignation of Arthur Young, who in his travels through France in 1786-7 of course visited the capital and its many churches, but looked upon everything with the eye of an agriculturist, and only saw in the rich meadows of the Benedictines so much wasted material for a prosperous farm. "It is the richest abbey in France; the abbot has 300,000 liv. a year. I lose my patience at seeing such revenues thus bestowed, consistent with the spirit of the tenth century, but not with that of the eighteenth. What a noble farm would a fourth of this income establish! What turnips, what cabbages, what potatoes, what clover, what sheep, what wool! Are not these things better than a fat ecclesiastic?"

Like Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the Sainte Chapelle originated in a sanctuary where precious relics might be safely deposited, though its foundation does not date back to the early zeal of the fresh-

converted Merovingian kings, but only to the crusades of Louis the Saint, who brought from the East the Crown of Thorns and some fragments of the True Cross. Legend describes the king as walking bare-foot through the streets of Sens and Paris, displaying his treasure-trove to an adoring multitude; but it soon became necessary to place the relics in sanctuary, and accordingly, in 1245, the celebrated architect, Pierre de Montereau, began to work out his plans under the direction of the king, and completed his chapel three years later. Its form was a curious one, consisting of two stages; the upper one, dedicated to the Sainte Couronne and the Sainte Croix, was reserved for the king and his court; the lower, bearing the name of the Virgin, was given over to servants, retainers, and the general multitude.

This upper chapel, which was then and still is to-day the chief glory of the building, was on a level with the royal apartments in the adjoining palace, and could thus be reached without descending into the court and re-ascending by the staircase. This chapel was the joy of Saint Louis' life, and during his reign no cost was spared in order to make it a fitting receptacle for the relics which he venerated and believed in as simply as a child, and for which he is said to have paid to the Byzantine emperor the enormous sum of two million *livres*. As

it now stands, the Sainte Chapelle has been almost completely restored, and this restoration, which was carried out in the last century, was embarked upon none to soon, judging from the accounts given of the state of the church after the Revolution. To begin with, it had been desecrated under the rule of the Goddess of Reason, and used for storing legal documents and papers; the beautiful glass of its windows, with its marvellous minuteness of design, was either destroyed or irregularly patched up; the spire was gone, and so was much of the sculpture and ornament, both outside and inside. There it stood, this monument of the piety of St. Louis, its founder forgotten, its glory departed, and its actual structure in danger of being swept away. Even its ancient surroundings, the Great Hall, the *Cour de Mai,* and the *Cour des Comptes* of Louis XII., had vanished; their place was occupied by modern law-courts, and the half-ruined church seemed hopelessly out of date and out of place. By a great stroke of good fortune the balance turned in its favour; it was decided not to pull it down, but to restore it as a chapel attached to the courts, where the lawyer might hear Mass; and, thanks to the care and skill of the restoring architect, it stands to-day in all essentials much as it did when Louis IX. worshipped there with his courtiers, when the light from the tall windows streamed

in upon the bright armour and rich garments of hundreds of noble figures, staining them with new and wonderful colours, and when the courts below were alive with a motley crowd, townsfolk of Paris, pressing to get a sight of the king's majesty, servants and retainers thronging round the doors or filing into Mass in the Chapel of the Virgin below, whose low roof and vaulting really gave it the appearance of a crypt to the soaring chapel of the Crown and Cross above it.

Until the time of Henri II. the kings of France lived in the great "Salle des Pas Perdus" as their royal palace; then the Parlement of Paris—a purely legal body—took possession of it, and the easy-going canons of the Sainte Chapelle ministered not to princes and nobles, but to the brisk, alert *gens de la robe,* who were quick to note and to laugh at their comfortable ecclesiastical placidity and ridiculous petty quarrels. Boileau, the famous satirist, was the son of a registrar, and grew up under the shadow of the law-courts, and it was he who in his "Lutrin" victimised the poor, ease-loving prebends and canons more than any of his fellows, though one of these canons was his own brother, and after Boileau's death heaped coals of fire upon the head, or rather, upon the memory, of the poet, by allowing his bones to rest within the building at whose servants he had

PONT ST. MICHEL AND STE. CHAPELLE, PARIS

so mercilessly mocked. The lawyers still have the possession of the Sainte Chapelle; but all stalls and seats have been removed and its doors are opened once a year only, when the autumn session begins, being inaugurated by the " Messe Rouge," celebrated by the Archbishop of Paris himself.

The Benedictine foundation of Saint Denis, though it stands outside the walls of the city, in a suburb where the tangle of machinery and smoke of factories make strange surroundings for the peace of the cloister, must always claim a right to come within the story of France's capital, since it is the last resting-place of France's kings. The legends of Paris and its saints ascribe the original foundation of the abbey church to the following story, which has come to be very well known, concerning as it does the patron saint of France. Saint Denis, who, as we have seen, was the first to evangelise in the marshes of Lutetia, suffered martyrdom under the Valerian persecutions in the third century, in the city where his good work had begun; but after his head had been struck off, the body, instead of falling lifeless at once, rose up from the block, took the head in its hands, and walked out of the city to the neighbouring town of Catulliacum, where it finally sought refuge in the villa of one Catulla, a Roman lady of noble and good repute, who instantly took possession of her sainted

charge and gave him Christian burial within her garden. So far is legend; at any rate, a chapel was erected over the shrine, and became, of course, an object of pilgrimage for many years. Then comes the story of Dagobert, the rebellious young prince who sought sanctuary in the chapel against the wrath of his father; and, inspired by a vision of the saint, promised to build a church on the same site. Accordingly, on his accession to his father's throne, the Abbey and Church of Saint Denis were founded in about 769. In the following century the Benedictine monks purchased their immunity from Norman invaders by large sums of money; but this contract seems to have availed them little, since the pirates, probably hoping for fresh plunder, despoiled the monastery as they had despoiled Saint-Germain-des-Prés. After this the foundation fell into a terrible state of neglect. Its abbots were fighting men—not necessarily ecclesiastics, for many nobles in those days held lay abbacies; Hugh Capet, for instance, was abbot of Saint Martin at Tours—and not until the day of the famous Suger did it recover anything like its ancient prestige. Suger was an old pupil of the Benedictines at Saint Denis, and a fellow-scholar there with the young prince Louis l'Eveillé, afterwards Louis VI., whose chief minister he became in later days. In the days of his prosperity the abbot

devoted himself to restoring and beautifying the church, and left full instructions to be carried out by his successor, when death prevented him from finishing what had been so nobly begun. The work languished again, however, until the reign of Louis IX., when Eudes de Clément and Matthieu de Vendôme took up the plans once more, and completed the church very much as we now see it.

It was at Saint Denis that was enacted the romance of the scholar Pierre Abélard and "la très-sage Hélois" of Villon, whose story is too well known—and, perhaps, also too secular—to quote here. Both lie buried now at Père-la-Chaise, their remains having been removed from the monastery at Cluny in 1791 by Lenoir, to his collection of fragments and old monuments spared from the Revolution. It was after the Revolution that the abbey suffered more terrible damage and desecration than ever invading heathens or conquering English had worked there. The Convention, in its haste to rid the country of every trace of the hated monarchy, must needs assail dead kings and queens as well as living ones. Consequently every tomb was ravaged and the dust of a hundred kings lay mingling with the dust of the common ditch. With the restoration of the Bourbons, Louis XVIII. ordered also the replacement, as far as it was possible, of the bones of his dead ancestors;

and the French kings sleep once again at Saint Denis, peaceful and undisturbed as in other years, though a smoky veil hangs over their resting-place and the roar of furnaces breaks the quiet of their ancient tombs.

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